
MONTALBERT.

A NOVEL.

VOL. III.

MONTAUBERT



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BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MONTALBERT.

CHAPTER XXV.

IT appears as if the fears, which had distressed Rosalie, had in some degree subsided when she thus proceeded with her narrative, or rather journal:—

"April 11th, 1783.

"It is now above a fortnight since I have been here. Every day has appeared more melancholy than that which preceded it; for every day and every hour diminishes my hope that Montalbert is

engaged in seeking me. Alas! could his vigilant love be deceived, or would not Signora Belcastro betray herself, had she been questioned?—Ah! fool that I am! I recollect that he could not question her; that he certainly could never know from her that Rosalie exists—Alozzi too is interested in deceiving him—perhaps we shall never meet again. Montalbert! perhaps I am doomed to pass here, in this dreadful solitude, a long and wretched life. It is now four days since I prevailed on Cattina to let me wander over the deserted grounds that were once a garden; she finds I make no attempt to abuse this indulgence, and she does not now interdict the woods that surround the enclosure, or even the sea shore, though it is there only that I am likely to meet any of the few human beings who inhabit this depopulated region. I have been down to the sands, and on the wave-worn remains of a marble column, once, perhaps, the ornament of the port; I have been sitting to look at the sea. A very few days

days since I should not have ventured hither, for then my imagination was filled with the fears that Cattina had so recently taught me, of Corsairs and Turks. By habit, and from having assured myself, by subsequent conversations, that Cattina had exaggerated and misdated her accounts, I had appeased those apprehensions, or learned to think of them with more steadiness: nor, indeed, could my walks increase, whatever real danger there might be, since, during the day time, any vessel would be discerned from the coast long before it could land its crew. I saw to-day a group of peasant girls picking up the small fish along the sand; they were gay and sportive, and seemed to have no fear of such visits as Cattina has described to me as frequently happening. I wished to have spoken to them; but, perhaps, I ought to consider it as a part of my convention with Cattina, not to enter into conversation with any of the persons I may chance to meet.—Alas! these poor

Calabrese could be of no use to me: they seemed to have no ideas beyond the little circle of their own necessities or pleasures; for though they must have known me to be a stranger, I excited no curiosity. Their happy indifference brought to my mind days when I was as thoughtless and as light-hearted as these simple peasants! That reflection was followed by the recollection of the circumstances that have happened to me within these last two years, and the chain of events, which, from one of the happiest, had reduced me to one of the most miserable of women. My waking dream lasted till the sun was set; the waves, as well as the whole horizon, assumed that rosy hue which mocks alike the pencil and the pen; I had heard that the exhalations from the marshes were unwholesome after a warm day, and I returned to my melancholy residence lest my child should suffer. Now, Montalbert, that he is sleeping by me, I relate on paper the sad employment of my solitary day—

day—alas! how many more may pass in the same manner—what a prospect is mine!

“It is night.—I go to my window and look at the stars, which, in this clear atmosphere, are singularly brilliant. I seek the north star, because, Montalbert, I believe that you are in England—an idea that sometimes torments and sometimes soothes me; yet I encourage it even when I am most pained by it, for you have returned thither, perhaps, if not to seek your Rosalie, to weep with her mother for her supposed death. . . . That dear mother!—ah! how many tears have I already cost her—how many will she shed over my imaginary grave; while I, buried yet living, call on her name—on yours, Montalbert, in vain!

“Perhaps it is fit we should suffer thus—perhaps it is the proper punishment for our disobedience. . . . Oh! if it be so, may I alone be pursued by the vengeance of Heaven, and may that little innocent creature be spared and restored to the
B 3
protection

protection of his father. It is possibly to me, to my rash folly, that Montalbert owes much of his present uneasiness : his mother may have driven him from her with reproaches, with anger—he may, on my account, be loaded with a parent's curse!—Dreadful thought! I dare not dwell upon it.

“ I cast my eyes round the high and gloomy room where I sit : all is silent and forlorn ; cold and faint, my heart seems to sink within me, and I listen, with even a degree of eagerness, to hear the slow footsteps of Cattina, along the apartments, bringing me my evening meal.

“ My keeper, for what else can I call her, is gone ; she seems every day to soften in her manners towards me, and especially since she finds my child is to be brought up in the religion of his father. Poor, prejudiced woman ; but she has not a bad heart, and there is something respectable even in her prejudices. I complained to her, this evening, of the languor I felt for want of some amusement when my
child

child slept; and I asked if there were no books to be obtained here?—It was some time before I could make her understand my question. At length, however, she told me, that at the farther end of the castle, in a room which is never opened, there are a great many papers, and she believes books; she promises to shew it me to-morrow. I may meet with some Italian poets, who may beguile those tedious minutes in which I am now tortured with my own thoughts. How well I remember, at Barlton Brooks, exploring the library of Mr. Lessington, and with as little success as I shall probably have to-morrow.

“ But talking to this woman has a little relieved my spirits; for even the sound of a human voice is consoling to my ear!

“ I will now endeavour to sleep.
Oh, come! thou image of my adored Montalbert—not as last night, in imaginary danger and contention, and risking, for my defence, a life more precious than my own—but come to whisper peace and hope

to the dreams of your devoted Rosalie!—
 Ah! would I could be assured that you
 will ever read my journal; that your eye
 will ever mark where the tears have blis-
 tered the paper as I write this, perhaps,
 fruitless wish!

" April 13th.

" I look back at my journal of yester-
 day, and of the preceding day, and am
 half-tempted to give up this monotonous
 account of lingering anguish. I have learn-
 ed nothing by my research after books,
 but the great extent of this my prison,
 and that it is Formiscusa, a castle situated
 seventeen miles from Squilace, and was
 the seat of feudal government, when the
 Norman Barons possessed this country.
 A rude map or chart, hung up against
 the walls of the room I explored yester-
 day, has told me this; but not without
 my taking some pains to get at the intel-
 ligence, by clearing away the mould with
 which it was covered, and, like many
 others, I have fought only my own pain;
 for

for I now see that, from the situation of the place, there is but too much reason to believe it must be, at all times, exposed to hostile visits from Africa, or Turkey in Europe. I thought I had reasoned myself out of these fears, but they return in spite of me—so prone is the human mind, when under the pressure of actual evils, to aggravate them by anticipation of the future.

“ You would chide me, Montalbert, for any tendency to indulge this disposition.—

Ah! wretch that I am, if you were here, should I murmur?—should I dream of evil?—Ah!—no—with you, this solitary and frowning pile would be to me a Paradise! I should then enjoy the beauty of a country, which, in some parts, is really lovely, but over which my eyes now wander often half-blinded by tears.

“ Since I have had permission to go out, however, and have walked about the garden, I am better; for there is a charm, in the contemplation of vegetable nature, that sooths my spirits beyond every thing

but music. When poor Rosalie Lefington was ill at ease, at Barlton Brooks, it was a feat on the turf of the downs, under the shade of an old thorn or a tufted beech, that she retired to sigh at liberty, though she then hardly knew why she sighed. Now the really unhappy Rosalie Montalbert, with her infant in her arms, and, ah! with sensations how different in her heart, finds a resting place on the plinth of a broken statue, or on a piece of granite rock, shaded with myrtle or embowered in arbutus, and surveys, with hopeless eyes, the sun sinking into the sea, from whence he will arise tomorrow to bring to her another day of tears and despair!

“ Just as I had finished the last sentence, Cattina came to tell me, that a Turkish xebec, chased by a Maltese galley, was in sight; and that I might now be convinced how very near the Barbarians sometimes approached the shore. I trembled, and had hardly strength to follow her up to the western tower, which
affords

affords the most extensive view: I saw two vessels, one of which pursued the other, but they were too distant for me to distinguish with what nations they were manned. Soon afterwards, however, they were so near that I could distinguish the form of the Turkish vessel, and see the crescent she bore as an ensign; but fighting did not seem to be her purpose at that time: for, finding the Maltese gain upon her, she set up more sail, and made every effort to get away. The enemy, however, pursued, and fired upon her; we heard the report, and soon after saw the flashes of the guns amid clouds of smoke; the Corsair returned the fire, but still made off, and, I suppose having some advantage as to lightness, soon got out of the reach of the firing. At length the xebec became like a doubtful spot in the horizon, and then entirely disappeared; while the Maltese vessel, to my great comfort, abandoned the chase, yet continued cruizing along the coast, as if to protect us against the invader, should he dare to return.

“ My eyes are affected by gazing so long at the dazzling expanse of sea, and they and my heart still flutter with apprehension. I dread going to bed, for I shall fancy I hear hostile sounds in the adjoining rooms, and threatening tones in an unknown language: yet I know these pirates are gone, and unlikely now to molest us.

“ I went down into the garden in hopes of calming my spirits before I attempted to sleep.—Already the heats have tarnished the lively verdure of spring, and the cicada has begun to devour the leaves; while in England the trees are but just budding, and the earlier shrubs hardly in leaf. If I were a poet, I should be tempted; were my heart ever for a moment at ease, to add one to the number of those who have celebrated, or have attempted to celebrate, the nightingale; for here the note of that bird is infinitely more mellow and delicious than in England. I have been vainly trying to recollect some of the most beautiful addresses to this songstress
of

of the night, but trouble and anxiety have driven from my memory the few images that, in my circumscribed reading, I had once collected. Montalbert! shall I ever again be restored to happiness and you?—If ever I am, shall I not feel myself so depressed, so undone, by this tedious course of suffering, as to have lost the few claims I had to your tendernefs.—Ah! here is another source of pain opened—I become a self tormenter. But, conscious that it is weak, nay, perhaps wicked, I will try to check this continual inclination to repine—I will kneel by my sleeping infant, and recommend him and Montalbert to the protection of that merciful Being, who preserved me and my child among the crash of ruins, and the yawning gulphs that surrounded us in Sicily, and who can deliver us from this dreary prison, and restore us to the husband and the father.”

The little narrative of Rosalie was now interrupted.

Wearied

Wearied by the continual sameness of wandering about the fortress, where gloomy strength was not allied to safety, and where there was no alternative between the stagnation of cheerless solitude and the tremors of fear, (for whenever she conversed with Cattina these fears failed not to be renewed), Rosalie, on the day following that of which she has last given an account, took a walk hitherto untried, and went down to the village, if a small group of fishermen's huts could be called so.—These were built with pieces of marble, intermingled with clay, and among them lay scattered many remains of magnificent buildings, pieces of large statues, and broken pillars. The idea of the splendid works of man fallen to decay, and hastening to oblivion, yet having survived for ages the beings who toiled to raise them, has always something mournful in it to a reflecting mind; and Rosalie was imagining to herself how different the appearance of this port must have been seven

ven hundred years ago, when it was crowded with vessels, and its streets displayed all that commerce then procured for the rich and luxurious. Now, strange reverse! a few half-naked children playing before the humble doors, where their sun-burnt mothers sat spinning coarse hemp, or a fisherman or two pushing off their barks with the evening tide, to fish during the night, on the success of which, their principal subsistence depended, were all the living beings visible in this obscure hamlet.

A high mound, rising in the midst of the village, had been formed by the fallen ruins of a temple. It was now covered with grass and low shrubs, but through them a marble capital, or an half-buried column, here and there were visible. On one of these last Rosalie sat down to rest a few moments before she returned home, and was sometimes indulging the reflections inspired by the place, sometimes talking to her child in a low and sweet voice, when she was startled by the footsteps of
a person

a person on the hollow ground near her; she looked suddenly up, and saw, not an Algerine pirate, but a gentleman, whom she immediately knew to be an Englishman.

Her amazement prevented her either moving or speaking; while the stranger, taking off his hat, said—"You must forgive me, Madam, if I cannot repress my curiosity—I believe you are English?—I fear I may appear impertinent; but it is impossible for me to restrain the eager wish I have to know by what extraordinary circumstance I here find a person so unlike the inhabitants—so unlike the objects I came hither to seek?"

However respectfully this address was made, there were places and occasions where Rosalie would have resented it as impertinent; but now, on the desert coast of Calabria, an Englishman seemed to her as a brother—and the accents of an English voice, as a voice from Heaven.

She tried, however, in vain to answer distinctly the unexpected question thus made,

made, and, faltering and trembling, said, in a voice hardly articulate, " I do not wonder, Sir, you are surprized at seeing me here! I am, indeed, an English stranger, and brought hither by a series of events too long to relate."—At that moment she recollected, that, if she was seen speaking to any one, her walks would be put an end to, and her confusion increased. She took courage, however, to add—" I am detained here wholly against my inclinations, and despair ever to revisit my native country. I thank you, Sir, for the interest you seem to take in my misfortunes; but I dread being seen to converse with -----;"

" Hasten then, I conjure you, (cried the Englishman), to tell me where you live, and how I can be of use to you. . . . Good God! you are here against your inclinations!—But who dares to confine you?—I am a stranger to you, Madam, and a mere idle wanderer in this land; but, as a man of your country, you have a right

a right to all my services—command, and be assured I will at least try to obey you.”

A ray of hope now darted into the mind of Rosalie. Prepossessed with an idea that Montalbert was in England, the offers of this gentleman seemed to be directed by the interposition of Heaven to convey her to him. The tumult of her spirits were too great to allow her to reflect on the hazard she might incur by putting herself into the power of a stranger ; the hopes of being conveyed to England, and Montalbert, by his means, absorbed at that moment every other consideration : but the more delightful the prospect was, the more she dreaded its vanishing, and this she knew would happen if Cattina discovered her talking to any one.

Terrified, therefore, lest she should be observed, she said, in a hurried way—
 “ I am so situated, that I dare not stay to explain who I am, or relate the causes that have made me a prisoner in the great
 castle

castle you see above ; but, if you are in the neighbourhood of this place to-morrow - - - - -”

“ If I am ? (cried the stranger eagerly), only tell me where I shall see you again, and I will wait your own time—I will attend you at the risk of my life.”

“ I hope, (interrupted Rosalie tremulously)—I hope there will be no risk. . . . If you will be, at five o’clock to-morrow evening, in a small wood, which is the boundary of a sort of garden on the other side of the castle, near a place where the remains of several statues surround a ruined fountain - - - - - ; (she recollected that she was making an assignation with a man she had never seen before, and stopped, for she felt all the impropriety of it ; yet, encouraged by her motives and the rectitude of her intentions, she proceeded)—I will be there, and explain to you who I am, and how - - - - you can oblige me, (she was going to say, but again checked herself, and only added)—but now it is impossible for me to stay.”

The

The stranger repeated her directions with earnestness, and assured her he would be there.—“ And this lovely child too ! (said he, still following her as she turned to go the castle), is this too of my country ? ” —“ It is mine, (answered Rosalie mournfully); but, indeed, you must now leave me, or your obliging offers of service will be frustrated.” —The gentleman bowed, and suffered her to go, following her with his eyes till she reached the buildings adjoining the castle, which concealed her from his sight. He then slowly retired, while Rosalie, breathless and trembling, sought her guard, and so over-acted her part, by complaining of her solitary walks, and affecting her former languor, that a more accurate observer than Cattina would have guessed that some unusual circumstance had befallen her.

Cattina had, however, no suspicions, and Rosalie went to her room, and to her reflections on what had passed.

She

She endeavoured to recal the person, expressions, and manner of the stranger to whom she had spoken, that she might now, in a cooler moment, ask herself whether he appeared to be really a gentleman, and one in whom she ought to repose so much confidence as to put herself under his protection.—He was a young man, apparently not more than two or three and twenty; his countenance was less handsome than expressive, and there was something remarkable in it, which Rosalie could not define. He had the air and manners of a gentleman; but she knew that many have those advantages whom it would be extreme imprudence to trust. Perhaps too, notwithstanding the earnestness with which he offered her any services in his power, he might shrink from the trouble and expence of conducting her and her child to England; for young as she was, and little as she had yet seen of the world, she was not now to learn that those who
 most

most warmly profess friendship, are often those who fly from the performance of any kindness at all inconvenient to themselves. These and other reflections half discouraged Rosalie from the plan she had formed, in the first moments of meeting, with a man who seemed to have the power of releasing her. The disposition of Montalbert forcibly recurred to her; he might be rendered for ever suspicious of her conduct, if she thus rashly entrusted herself to a person of whom she could know nothing, and whose character might be such as would entirely ruin hers, in the opinion of the world, when it should be known that she had been conducted by him to England.— Yet, on the other hand, in losing the only opportunity to escape that might ever offer, she condemned herself and her little boy to perpetual imprisonment, and became accessory to her own misery and that of Montalbert. Ah! who could tell that he would not, in the persuasion
of

of her death, yield to the importunities of his mother, and marry the Roman lady to whom she had so long wished to unite him. This idea was as insupportable as that of his death, and, compared with its being realized, every other evil became light, and every hazard disappeared.— Sometimes, however, the fear of her husband's having perished at Messina obtruded itself; but the pains his mother had taken to conceal her argued strongly against it. But, even if such a calamity had really happened, it seemed to be the duty of his widow to claim the rights of his child, and how could this be done but by having recourse to her friends in England: for friends, she believed, she had, not only in her mother, who would protect and assist, though she could not own her, but in Charles Vyvian her real, and William Lessington her adopted, brother. Towards these she thought she might look for protection and kindness; and these hopes, added to her dread of remaining for life in the melancholy

lancholy and even dangerous solitude of Formiscusa, determined her, if the stranger on their meeting still appeared willing to assist her, to endeavour, by his means, to reach England.

CHAP. XXVI.

SO various and contradictory were the thoughts which agitated Rosalie during the night, that she found it impossible to sleep; she arose with the earliest dawn, and, though so many hours were to intervene before that of her appointment, she could not forbear going to the place she had marked to her new friend for their meeting, that she might be sure she had described it accurately. She returned, however, almost immediately to the house, for, conscious of having something to hide, she now feared Cattina might suspect her.

From the windows towards the sea she now again saw the Maltese galley, which had been some days hovering on the coast. It cast anchor near the shore, a

boat put off from it, and landed behind a small promontory, which formed one side of the port. It now occurred to Rosalie, that there was some connection between the arrival of this vessel and that of her new acquaintance. He came then from Malta, and was in all probability returning thither. If such was the case, how could he charge himself with her and her child?—or, admitting he would do so, how could she expose herself to the hazard of traversing the sea in a Maltese vessel, which, she knew, was liable to be continually engaged by Turkish and Algerine pirates. These doubts, added to those she had before, served to agitate her spirits so much, that, when the hour of appointment came, she had hardly strength to go to the fountain in the wood, where her English friend had arrived before her.

Rosalie trembled, and looked so pale as she advanced towards him, that, alarmed, he said—“ I hope, Madam, nothing has happened, since I had the honour of
meeting

meeting you yesterday, to give you uneasiness?—I hope the favour you do me, by thus condescending to come hither ————”

Rosalie, whose heart beat so violently that she was unable to speak, interrupted him by a deep sigh, and a faint attempt to articulate “No, Sir! nothing has happened——only I am so—so—unfortunate, and so uncertain what is to become of me, that ————.” She could not proceed, but leaned against a tree, and tried to recover herself, while the stranger, who was apprehensive she would faint, led her towards a piece of broken marble, and entreated her to sit down upon it; she did so, and, in a short time, assured him she was better, and begged his pardon for the weakness she had betrayed.

“I own, Madam, (said the stranger), that my curiosity is very strongly excited, and that I am impatient to know how I can be servicable to you? I might claim a sort of privilege to be admitted to your confidence, because I am of the same na-

tion; but I rather rest my plea on the earnest inclination I feel to be employed in your service: if, as I fear, you are unhappy, and suffering from the tyranny of some relation-----." The stranger hesitated, as if uncertain how to proceed on a subject that might be of a very delicate nature, and, from his manner, it struck Rosalie as if he thought she was confined by her husband—an impression which might involve her in very disagreeable consequences. She, therefore, took courage to say—"It is true I am a prisoner at this place, and am most desirous of being released, in hopes of being restored to my husband, who would, I am sure, be very grateful to any one who undertook to assist me in regaining my liberty—if (added she) he still lives—as I will not suffer myself to doubt."

"Good God! (exclaimed the English stranger), by what accident, for it is impossible it should be from choice, could a man, happy enough to be your husband, allow

allow himself to be torn from you; and who can have authority to confine you here?"

"My story is long and extraordinary, (answered Rosalie); I can only relate now, that I was separated from my husband in consequence of the earthquake which destroyed Messina, and that his mother, averse to his marriage with a woman of another religion and country, has taken occasion to divide us, as she hopes, for ever, by confining me here, and probably by persuading him that I am no more."

"He is an Italian then?" cried the stranger.

"Born of an Italian mother, (replied Rosalie), but his father was an Englishman, and of an ancient English family."—

The recollection that Montalbert might at this moment believe her dead, and even be the husband of another, added to the fear that she was perhaps doing wrong, and putting herself into the power of a
 c 3 man

man who might take base advantages of her confidence, were sensations so uneasy, that, losing the little fortitude she had collected, she burst into tears.

The gentleman appeared to be really hurt at her distress; and, lowering his voice, said—"I thank you, Madam, for the confidence you have already placed in me; perhaps I ought not to expect you to trust me farther, till I tell you who it is that you so highly honour, and by what accident I am in a part of Italy so seldom visited by English travellers. But suffer me to ask, if you are now secure from the malicious observations of this Italian woman, who exercises over you tyranny so unjustifiable?"

"There are only servants in the castle, (replied Rosalie). My persecutors deemed them sufficient for the purpose of guarding me in a place so remote, that my escape seemed impossible. I believe they will not molest me here, as I am accustomed to walk alone of an evening."

"Since

“ Since you permit me then, (said the stranger), I will relate, in a few words, what you have a right, Madam, to know, before I can expect you will rely on my assurances, of being ready to render you any service you may honour me with; and yet I am sensible that a man is never more awkwardly circumstanced than when he is obliged to speak of himself, and, above all, to tell who he is. It is particularly difficult for me to do this, (added he, in a dejected tone), since I have not unfrequently forgotten myself, or, at least, been in a disposition of mind which made me very sincerely try at it.” —

He paused, but Rosalie continuing silent and attentive to him, he went on—

“ Perhaps, if your residence in England was in the west, you may have heard of the family of Walsingham—I am of that family. It is not necessary to relate to you, Madam, the particular circumstances of a life which has had nothing uncommon in it, unless it be that I lost, at an early period, the person with whom

I hoped to have passed it in as much happiness as mutual affection and a coincidence of disposition could promise.—

From that time, the death of my elder brother having made the pursuit of the profession to which I was brought up unnecessary, I have wandered over the world, with the hope of finding, in change of place, a temporary relief for the wounds which no time can cure; and I have succeeded so far, as to take some interest in the objects which nature, or art, present to the traveller, particularly in Italy: as I had before visited almost every part of it, except Malta and Calabria ultra, and found that my spirits once more required change of place, I left England about two months since for Leghorn, from thence I got a passage to Malta, and having a curiosity to visit that part of Calabria immediately opposite the coast of Sicily, which had been so lately the scene of one of the most tremendous convulsions of Nature on record, I embarked in a Maltese galley, commanded by the

Chevalier

Chevalier de Montagny, a French Knight of Malta, with whom I had been fortunate enough to make an acquaintance; and we designed to have extended our cruize to the Gulph of Manfredonia, but having seen an Algerine or Turkish xebec, which the Chevalier had reason to believe was hovering about the coast with piratical intentions, he determined to attempt taking it. We were in chase for many hours; after which, the Chevalier casting anchor about a mile from hence, I inquired, as I usually do, what there was worth landing to see?—and with some difficulty discovered, that we were near the ancient port of Formiscusa, where there were a few fine remnants of Roman buildings, and where I might very probably find coins, or small pieces of sculpture. My friend de Montagny, whose intention it was to watch the xebec, which, he believed, intended to return, assured me, that I might come on shore and satisfy my curiosity without any danger of his leaving me behind. I avail-

ed myself, therefore, of the occasion, and had been purchasing some antiquities, of little value to them, among the peasants of the village, when, surveying that spot where there are evidently the ruins of a temple, I was surprised to observe a lady, whom I immediately saw was very unlike the inhabitants of the surrounding country, and who, on my nearer approach, I heard speak in accents which confirmed my first idea of her being an Englishwoman. Ah ! Madam, how happy shall I esteem myself, if, in the accidental indulgence of that curiosity, where the highest gratification it can afford, is but a very transient relief to a mind incurably hurt, I should prove the means of being essentially useful to a young lady—who—I am ill at expressing what I feel, and know that you are, that you must be, superior to common-place compliments: yet I cannot refrain from saying, that, as being of the same country, you have on that score a right to my best services, though, that were you of
any

any other, one need only behold you to be convinced that you must command the most respectful homage of every man."

Rosalie, who had rather the latter part of this speech had been spared, now hesitated, blushed, and attempted to speak, but she failed; and Walsingham, who saw her embarrassment, and appeared perfectly to understand it, resumed his discourse.

"Unless I know more of your situation, than, on so short an acquaintance, you may think it proper to entrust me with, I cannot venture to advise; but I can, with great truth, assure you, that if you will venture to put yourself under my care, I shall think it the most fortunate circumstance of my life, to be allowed to conduct you from hence, in whatever manner you think consistent with safety or propriety, and to whatever place you shall point out. I will not leave you till you are secure in the protection of some of your friends, and I will attend

you either to any part of the continent, or to England."

Rosalie, now confirmed in her resolution to depart, looked as if she would express her thanks, when Walsingham, who appeared already to have acquired the art of reading her thoughts, said, "And do not, I beseech you, Madam, imagine that, by my undertaking this, you will be under the least obligation to me: far otherwise, believe me—for you will confer the greatest of possible obligations on a man, to whom life has no longer any value, but what he can derive from being serviceable to others."

Rosalie now thought herself perfectly justified in accepting an offer which threatened no inconvenience to the stranger, while it promised to restore her to liberty, and, perhaps, to felicity. Dismissing then all the objections, which still attempted to obtrude themselves on her mind, she entered into a discussion of the best means of escaping from a place, where the

the few precautions, that were taken to secure her stay, arose merely from the supposed impracticability of her flight.

After a long conversation it was agreed, that however desirable it might be for her to go by land, yet she would incur great risk of being pursued, and in such roads must inevitably be overtaken.—Nothing therefore remained but for her to accept what Mr. Walsingham very earnestly offered, in the name of his friend the Chevalier de Montagny, a conveyance in the Maltese galley to any port from whence it was possible a passage to England could be the most quickly obtained; Walsingham assuring her that the vessel and its commander would be entirely at her orders.

This point being settled, it was next to be considered how and when she could leave her prison with the least probability of detection. This was not difficult; but aware, from past experience, of the many inconveniences which must be encountered at sea, it was necessary that what baggage she had should go with her,
 she

she reminded Walsingham that she could not convey this herself, nor could she even carry it from her room to the lower part of the house, without hazarding a discovery. After a moment's consideration he obviated this objection, by telling her, that as, from her description, the castle was very large, and that there were only two servants and a peasant who slept there, nothing was more easy than to introduce a sailor, or more, if more were requisite, who would probably be able to pass through the house unnoticed, and convey away whatever she wished to have with her. He added, "and I will come with them myself to prevent all accidents from rashness or blunders. There is a moon, about two o'clock, which will afford us light enough; it is an hour when your keepers will be asleep, and there can be no difficulty in your then leaving a house so slightly guarded."

Rosalie now recollected that there was a very material one—that of the doors being always shut of a night with great
circumspection,

circumspection, at least so she imagined, because she had frequently heard Cattina, after she had left her of a night, go round all that part of the building adjoining the great staircase, up which the distant noise of shutting and barring the massive doors sounded in fullen echoes. She had often listened, after all had been still, for some moments, and believed that she heard the same precautions taken in the more remote parts of the edifice; parts, indeed, where she had never been.

When she communicated this to Mr. Walsingham, he became impatient.—“If the doors are not easily opened, (cried he), we will cut them down; nay, rather batter them with three or four eight pounders, from our galley, than fail.”—Rosalie turned pale at the very mention of any expedient of this kind.—Ah, no! (said she); if my escape cannot be effected without the hazard of shedding blood, I must resign myself to my deplorable destiny—for I had rather perish here than be the cause of one man’s death.

Ah!

Ah! Sir, you do not consider, that, by the least alarm given from the castle, the village below, as well as another higher up the country, would, in an instant, send forth their inhabitants; beside there are arms kept in a lower room, which Cattina once shewed me, and a subterraneous communication with the cannon you see without."——Walsingham smiled at the formidable phalanx her fancy had thus embodied, well assured that a very few resolute men would put to flight not only the inhabitants of the castle, but all the peasantry around it who could be collected, and who could have little temptation to risk their lives in defending the mansion of a woman, whom they had, perhaps, never seen, and to whom they seemed to be very little obliged. Rosalie, however, after pausing a moment, said she recollected, that, on the day when Cattina undertook to shew her where she might, perhaps, find some books, she had led her along a passage adjoining to her bedchamber, and from thence down several

veral flights of narrow stairs to the bottom of the building, whence some places, that appeared like arched vaults, led into the room where the papers were deposited, and from thence there was a door opening into the fossé next the garden. She had particularly remarked this door, because Cattina had opened it to give more light to the apartment, which was extremely obscure, from part of it being under ground.—“ Cattina (continued she) left me there alone for a considerable time, and when I came out of the room, the door still remained open; it is therefore probable, that there are no fastenings to it, and that I might go from thence, as well as have my clothes conveyed thither, without alarming Cattina and the other servants, who inhabit quite another part of the house.”——Walsingham eagerly seized on this idea, but started a difficulty that had not occurred to Rosalie.—“ How (said he) shall we, who are strangers to the castle, find this door, unless we are first shewn it?”—Rosalie had nothing to propose.

propose.—“Unless, (added her new friend, after a little recollection), unless I could, before it is dark, go round the castle, when I think I could easily discover the place; there we would wait for you, or, if we found the door open, make our way up, at the hour appointed, to your apartment.”

To this scheme, though she had nothing better to offer, Rosalie objected, because she dreaded, lest the sight of a stranger should raise suspicions in the servants; and she knew that Cattina, whose head was filled with ideas of pirates, since the appearance of one of their xebecs on the coast, was become more than usually vigilant in watching, at the windows, if these objects of her terror again appeared.

“What is to be done then, dearest Madam? (cried Walsingham); we have no time to lose, and it is absolutely necessary that we determine on something.—

Can you not, from some place where there is no danger of our being remarked, point out the side of the building where this
door

door opens into the fossé?"——This appeared the least perilous plan, but it was also the most uncertain. Rosalie then led the way, along the skirts of the wood, to a rising ground, affording a view of the whole building, and bade Mr. Walsingham remark three tall cypresses near its western extremity.——"If you pass them, (said she), and walk straight on, you will come to what was once a deep fossé immediately surrounding the castle; but now it is in many places nearly filled up, and the earth and wall are fallen in, in-somuch that, when I looked out for a moment at the door in question, rather for air than from any curiosity, I perceived I could have got up into the garden by this way."——Walsingham fixed his eyes steadily on the place, assured Rosalie he should not fail to find it; then again repeated, that he would be punctually at the place, with his own servant and a sailor, at two o'clock in the morning, an hour when he knew the moon would afford light to facilitate their getting

getting on board the vessel, which would immediately sail. He inquired, if Rosalie had a watch; she had lost hers in leaving Sicily; and, therefore, that no mistake might happen as to the hour, he desired she would make use of one of his, which he set by the other.

It now became time to part, for the evening was closing in. Walsingham, after a renewal of every protestation which was likely to encourage the timid adventurer, whose fears and agitation he saw painted in her countenance, took a hasty leave, was presently lost among the trees, while Rosalie slowly returned to her gloomy prison, dreading lest any accident should prevent her leaving it; yet trembling at the hazard she must incur, and the difficulties she must encounter, to regain her liberty.

CHAP. XXVII.

AFTER having given the usual attention to her little boy, Rosalie was at liberty to make the few arrangements that were necessary, and to reflect on the step she was about to take. However earnestly she had wished for such an opportunity as was offered her, she trembled now that the moment approached; yet all she had heard from Mr. Walsingham, and his zeal, which did not seem lessened by the knowledge of her being married, ought to give her strength of mind and courage. But the uncertainty of the time of when she should reach England; the comfortless circumstance of her being so long on board a vessel, which might be encountered by pirates, where she would be the only woman;

the

the sickness and difficulties of such a voyage with a little infant; and the doubts how far her husband might approve of her thus putting herself wholly in the power of a stranger, were considerations, which, though they did not shake her resolution, gave dreadful agitation to her spirits as she was about to execute it.

Other fears too assailed her.—The door in the fossé might not be open; she was far from being sure she could find her way to it; and she shuddered at the thoughts of descending these long and intricate stair-cases, and traversing the vault-like passages leading to the room which she was not certain she should find. Cattina had told her a story of a former lord of the castle, she knew not his name, who, being jealous of his wife, had invited the Signeur, whom he suspected of being in her favour, to an entertainment, when he had killed him, and buried him in some of these rooms, and that lights had often been seen from the loops and windows, and strange noises heard in this end of the castle,

castle, and that nobody had lived in the lower apartments since that time. This was a story which had the less affected Rosalie when she heard it, because it was so common in all old houses in England to have such a legend. Holmwood had the ghost of a lady, in a ruff and farthingale, which always walked on Friday nights; and she was not at all surpris'd, that the old castle of Formiscusa was furnished with the spirit of a murdered knight: but now, that it was necessary for her to wander alone over the deserted caverns, which were the supposed scenes of such a tragic adventure, the same fears and feelings returned as had oppress'd her mind on the first two or three days after her arrival in this desolate mansion.

While these thoughts pass'd in succession through her mind, the hour arriv'd for Cattina to bring her evening meal. Cattina came as usual, but was not in one of her best humours; she was sullen and gloomy, and, instead of such conversation as she sometimes held, she seem'd dispos'd

to

to mutter complaints, though in indirect and general terms. Rosalie, afraid of her staying, and too conscious of what was passing in her own mind, was not able to command resolution enough to sooth and flatter her into better temper, which she had not unfrequently done. Cattina, however, having fidgetted about the room a little in her odd way when her temper was discomposed, sat down, and a silence ensued, when Rosalie heard the watch in her pocket, and was struck with the fear that Cattina would hear it too, and knowing she had not one before, would inquire how she came by it; at this idea she felt the blood forsake her cheeks, and was so much discomposed, that, to a more accurate observer than Cattina, she would undoubtedly have betrayed herself.

Cattina, however, who had some grievances of her own, was fortunately less quick-sighted and intelligent than many who might have been chosen for the office of keeper, and after perplexing Rosalie by a longer stay than usual, while she talked
and

and made as much noise as she could; the female warder of the castle departed, and, as she marched slowly through the adjoining rooms, Rosalie fervently prayed that she might never hear those sounds again.

She now debated with herself, whether it would be better to go down first and examine the door, or wait till the hour when she expected Mr. Walsingham to arrive at it, and, after some deliberation, she determined on the former plan, reflecting, that if they came, and found it fastened, the rashness of Mr. Walsingham, who seemed to despise every danger that could arise from within the castle, might either impede her flight, or stain it with some deed of violence.

It was necessary, however, to stay till she was sure that Cattina, and the two servants who belonged to the castle, were retired for the night; and indeed she dreaded the expedition too much to anticipate its execution. She endeavoured, by every argument she could draw from

reason and religion, to fortify herself against the fears that assailed her, and, for a moment, thought she had conquered them. The appearance of such a man as Mr. Walsingham, at such a place as Formiscusa, seemed little less than a miracle, and she endeavoured to persuade her mind it was the particular interposition of Heaven in her favour; and that to neglect such an occasion of delivering herself from perpetual confinement, would be ingratitude to the Almighty, as well as contrary to the duty she owed her husband, her child, and herself. Innocent as she was of all offence towards God or Man, what had she to fear?

Fortifying her mind with these reflections, and endeavouring to look beyond present inconveniences, she thought upon the time when she should be restored to Montalbert, and should remember all that now perplexed and oppressed her only as a fearful dream.

Listening attentively to the well-known sounds of shutting the doors, in the inhabited

habited part of the building, she heard them closed for the night in the usual manner; she then went to the window to see what was the weather—there was more wind than common, and she saw the old cypresses wave in the blast. From the sea, on the other side, the moon that was to light her on her perilous way was just emerging. She addressed herself to Heaven, and implored its protection; and, conscious of the rectitude of her intentions, believed that she should go through the evening's task with resolution.

Her own and her child's clothes were collected in the trunks. She had dressed him ready for the journey before she put him to bed, and he slept undisturbed by the anxieties that agitated his mother's breast, who, having determined not to attempt to sleep, looked continually at the watch, and thought that time moved more than usually slow. It was, however, near midnight, and, once more collecting all her resolution, she determined on examining the door by which she hoped to

D 2

escape.

escape. She opened, not without difficulty, that of her chamber, which led to the avenues of this lower room, and such was the violence of the wind that rushed along the passages, that had she had a candle in her hand it must have been extinguished; she trembled, and, retreating, shut the door hastily. Warned by this circumstance, she now considered what would be her situation should the light be extinguished while she was descending, and should she lose her way among the many winding passages which she remembered having seen when she followed Cattina. The apprehension was fearful, and again her resolution to go down the stairs failed her.

She returned to her child, whom she hoped would sleep till her return, kissed him, and, imploring for him the protection of Heaven, tried to regain her courage; but as the dread of being left in utter darkness, which the rising wind gave her great reason to fear, was still the predominant idea, she endeavoured to take
such

such precautions as occurred to her against it, and surrounded the candle, she was to carry, with a skreen of paper, lighting at the same time the lamp that hung in the room: then looking at the watch, and finding it past midnight, she once more summoned all her resolution, and softly opening the door that the force of the gust might be less suddenly felt, she advanced along the passage that went from her room to the place where another branched from it, leading to the narrow winding stairs. She looked fearfully along these black and apparent endless avenues; the half-obscured light, lent by her shaded candle, served, indeed, to make "*darkness visible*." She feared to look long on the dreary vacuity, lest her imagination should embody forms of its own creation; she reached the staircase, and a stronger blast of wind, gathering here as in a funnel, threatened to extinguish her light, which she even held with difficulty. She found herself, however, on the next floor, in a sort of landing place, from whence other

passages led off she knew not whither, and she stopped a moment to regain her breath, of which fear had nearly deprived her.

In this pause, however prone her fancy was to imaginary sounds as well as sights of horror, she heard nothing but the loud gusts of wind that collected beneath from various openings in the walls, and being confined among narrow-vaulted passages, groaned in loud gusts, then sunk into fullen murmurs. Still Rosalie knew it was but the wind, the same wind that would probably in a few hours lend its friendly assistance to waft her to the place from whence she might procure a passage to England. This thought animated her courage; she raised her eyes, and assured herself that she saw nothing which could give her the least alarm; bare and broken walls, and dark avenues, which she had no business to explore, surrounded her: she determined then to pursue her way slowly and cautiously, for the steps of the second flight of stairs were broken and decayed;

decayed ; she advanced, when she was suddenly stopped by a sound, which she thought was that of human voices speaking low—she listened with a beating heart. A gust of wind, more violent than she had yet heard, impeded for a moment her distinguishing any other noise ; but, as it died away, she was convinced she heard talking, and that there were two or more voices.—What should this mean?—With a trembling hand she once more took the watch, Walsingham had given her, from her pocket. It was not yet half an hour after twelve, and the appointment was not till two. This noise then could not be occasioned by Walsingham and his people waiting for admittance.—What then should it be?—but that their project was by some accident discovered, and that the agents of Signora Belcastro were waiting to entrap those on whom she depended for her deliverance, and that they would afterwards punish her for attempting to escape ; probably by tearing her child

D 4

from

from her, and confining her to some dungeon beneath the castle. These terrific ideas deprived her, for a moment, of the power of moving from the place where she stood; but she had gained recollection enough to resolve on returning up stairs, and shutting her door, before these her cruel pursuers should arrive at it, when a loud and violent crash confirmed all her fears; she turned, and, as hastily as her trembling limbs would carry her, she ascended the stairs, treading lightly. Almost immediately she heard the footsteps of some person following her. Her resolution would now have failed entirely, if the greater fear had not conquered the less; for she imagined, that while she was thus absent, her little infant, whom she had left sleeping in its bed, might be carried away; and that idea was so much more dreadful than any thing that could befall herself only, that she sprang forward with unusual swiftness—her candle was extinguished, and she had no light to
guide

guide her, yet continued to make her way, where, at another time, she would have found it difficult even by day.—

The steps behind were heard more near, and she thought the man that followed was but a very little way from her when she reached the top of the stairs; the door of her room, which she had left open, was so still, and the lamp that remained burning afforded her light to guide her to it. She ran forward to the bed; her boy was calmly sleeping as she had left him; she threw her arms round him, and sunk, quite exhausted with fear, by his side—still sensible, but in terror too great to be supported.

The man who had so alarmed her, guided by the same light, followed her into the room, and approached her. Determined to die, rather than part with her child, she shrieked faintly, and implored inarticulately his mercy..... But it was Walsingham himself that spoke to her, conjuring her, in the strongest, yet most

respectful terms, to recollect herself, protesting that she had nothing to fear, unless from delay; since, from the noise he had been obliged to make, it was possible the people in the castle might be alarmed. He briefly accounted for coming so much before his time, by telling her, that the wind rising, the Chevalier de Montagny was afraid that the least increase might compel him to put out to sea; in which case she would have lost the chance of escaping, as he could not have returned while it blew from the same quarter, which it sometimes did for many weeks; and that they had, therefore, agreed that it would be better for them to force the door, in which they had found no difficulty, and rather to hazard alarming her for a moment, than not ensure her future safety.

Rosalie, restored to herself by this reasonable account, now exerted herself to fly for ever from this place of dread, under the guidance of her generous protector,

factor, who told her two men were below that only waited his signal to fetch her baggage. This he immediately gave; and Rosalie, having only to wrap her little boy in the same coverings as had served them before, during their long journey, was instantly ready with him in her arms.

Walsingham conducted her carefully down with her sleeping charge, the two men following with the trunks. Some little difficulty occurred in her mounting the broken fosse on the other side; but she was light, and naturally alert, and though she still trembled from her late terror, the certainty of being released from her cruel confinement, of which there now seemed no doubt, lent her strength, with the assistance of Walsingham's servant, (for she would trust her child only to Walsingham himself), to conquer this impediment. Her deliverer then followed, and restored his charge to her, and offering her his arm, which she readily accepted, they hastened as much

as her strength would admit, and, after about an hour's walking, found themselves on the shore, where the boat waited that was to carry them on board the Maltese galley.

CHAP. XXVIII.

THOUGH, on account of the tide, the embarkation was troublesome, and though the surge ran high, as the boat made its way to the ship, yet Rosalie, who now no longer doubted of her escape, was unconscious of inconveniences, which, at another time, would have alarmed her. The moment they were safely on board the Maltese vessel, Walsingham expressed his satisfaction in a manner that gave Rosalie the most favourable impressions of the goodness of his heart, and the sincerity of his professions; while the Chevalier de Montagny welcomed her with all the politeness and urbanity, for which military men of a certain age, and of his nation, were once so justly esteemed. He entreated her to consider herself as

mistress

mistress of the ship, and assured her, that whatever merit there might be in the original purpose of his voyage, there was infinitely more in being instrumental to the deliverance of so fair a captive from imprisonment; and in answer to the mingled thanks and apologies which she attempted to utter, he said that he only did his duty when he lent what assistance he could to his English friend, for that he was bound, by his military and religious oath, to succour the injured and distressed in every part of the world. The Chevalier then led her into a small state cabin, extremely commodious for the size of the ship, and assured her it was hers till she was landed wherever Mr. Walsingham should direct, and about which they were then going to consult; that he would only direct some refreshment to be brought to her, and then leave her to repose.

Rosalie, who, by the quick succession of fear and hope, had hardly had time to recollect her scattered senses during the last few hours, now looked round her,
and

and saw herself in comparative security. Delivered from the power of the unrelenting Signora Belcastro, in the protection, as she believed, of men of honour, and in a way of returning to her country, where she assured herself she should meet her husband, she now offered up her acknowledgments to that Power who had miraculously interposed to save her; her full heart, relieved by prayer and tears, beat less tumultuously, and, notwithstanding the rolling of the ship, for the wind still continued high, she suffered less than she had ever done at sea before; and even slept many hours, awaking much refreshed in the morning, and able to go upon deck, where, as the sea was now calm, the sails only gently swelled with a summer breeze.

Mr. Walsingham and the Chevalier de Montagny both attended her, and she very soon learned to consider the one as a father, the other as a brother; for the former was near fifty years of age. Walsingham no longer made those speeches
expressive

expressive of admiration which had given her some pain on their first meeting; he seemed no more to consider her as a beautiful young woman, to whom such compliments might be acceptable, but as a wife, whom he was restoring to her husband; as a mother, whom he had preserved for her child. Since he knew she was married, she was to him but as a sister; and, indeed, he now repeated, that all his affections were buried with the amiable Leonora he had lost, and whose death he yet deplored in terms so pathetic, that, as she listened to him, the soft eyes of Rosalie were frequently filled with tears.

The second day after they were on board, and as soon as Rosalie seemed quite recovered from the fright and fatigue that she had suffered the night she quitted Formiscusa, Walsingham took occasion to tell her, that he had consulted with the Chevalier de Montagny, who submitted to him at what port in the Mediterranean they would be landed; and that he had settled it should be

be at Marseilles, whither they were now making their way with a favourable wind. To this Rosalie had nothing to object. Wherever there seemed the greatest certainty of an immediate passage to England appeared to her the most eligible; and she heard with pleasure, such as she had long been a stranger to, that, if the wind continued as favourable as it now seemed to promise, they should be at Marseilles in two or three days.

In the mean time, though the dread of having been too sanguine as to the fate of Montalbert, sometimes obtruded itself upon her mind, she endeavoured to appease these fears; and when she had once found courage to relate to her two new friends the circumstances under which they had been separated, she received consolation in hearing their opinions that Montalbert was safe; and when doubts and apprehensions, as to where he might be, tormented her, Walsingham bade her recollect how easily she might from Marseilles make inquiry at Naples, and, if he
was

was in Italy, inform him of her health and residence. What was to become of her till all this could be done made now no part of her uneasiness; for she hoped and believed the dear mother she had left in England was ready, if not to acknowledge her as her daughter, to receive her as her niece, for her marriage with Montalbert could no longer be a secret. To Charles Vyvian also, and to William Lessington, she thought it might now be told; and to the former she believed the knowledge of it would render her as dear as if their nearer relationship was known.

While these hopes soothed the solitary hours of Rosalie, her conversations with Walsingham impressed her every moment with greater respect for his character, and pity for the dejection he frequently seemed to feel. He seldom spoke of himself; but she found, from his general conversation, that, in the possession of an affluent fortune, he had no other satisfaction than as it afforded him the means of bestowing individual benefits on his friends,

friends, or assisting, with general benevolence, the unfortunate of every description. While he was thus engaged, the heavy pressure, which early disappointment had laid on his heart, seemed to be lightened. When neither of these objects happened to be immediately within his reach, his spirits were extremely unequal; sometimes he was apparently careless and gay, talked of the pursuits which usually occupy men of his age with indifference; threw some degree of ridicule on the importance so frequently affixed to them; and declared himself a philosopher, a citizen of the world, who never meant to fix himself to any country, or any plan of life; and Rosalie observed with concern, that, after these efforts, of what she could not but consider as forced and artificial spirits, he sometimes sunk into the deepest dejection; when silent, absent, and with a countenance where melancholy and regret were strongly expressed, he appeared rather to suffer life than to enjoy it. He had general and brilliant talents, a mind highly

highly cultivated, and a taste elegant and correct. There was no science to which he was a stranger, and every European language was familiar to him. Young as he was, he had seen a great deal of the world; and he had not merely seen it as it appears to a man of fortune, for his devolved to him by the death of an uncle and an elder brother; but was perfectly qualified to judge of the different receptions given by that world to a young man who has his way to make in it, or one who possesses a large independent fortune. This knowledge had matured his judgment, without narrowing his heart. The variety of countries he had visited, and the characters he had studied, rendered his conversation extremely entertaining; for, when his spirits were really good, it was enlivened by flashes of wit, or by anecdotes well told. In his most melancholy hours he would seek the company of Rosalie, and engage her insensibly in conversation, which naturally turned on Montalbert.

Of an evening, as they sat on the deck together, this sort of discourse sometimes continued till Rosalie melted into tears, and till, her fears awakened and encouraged by thus recounting them, she deplored Montalbert as if certain of his death, while Walsingham, instead of attempting, as he had often done, to dissipate her apprehensions, wept too. The tears slowly stealing down his cheeks, till suddenly starting, he would seem to recollect the weakness, and indeed cruelty, towards Rosalie, of indulging and encouraging such emotions, and hastily bidding her good night, would hurry to the cabin of De Montagny.

This respectable man, who had conceived a sincere affection for his English friend, had, when Rosalie was first mentioned to him, imagined, that Walsingham had met with some fair adventurer, and was, according to the usual morality of his country, extremely willing to assist him in taking advantage of such a meeting; but when he saw Rosalie, and had conversed

versed with her, he was convinced that he had formed a wrong opinion, and began to be apprehensive lest such an acquaintance should have serious consequences for his friend. When he did not make a third in their conversations, he judged of what had passed by the manner of Walsingham after them. The third or fourth day of their voyage, which, for want of wind, was lengthened beyond what he had expected, he took occasion to ask Walsingham, very seriously, what he meant to do with his fair countrywoman?

“ What I mean to do with her? (replied Walsingham). . . . Nay but, my dear Sir, what a question is that?—To restore her certainly to her friends in England—to this happy Montalbert, if he be living!”

“ If you do so, my friend, (said De Montagny), let your name be enrolled by the side of Scipio’s, for assuredly your merit will be as great.”

“ Not at all!—Scipio was enchanted by the beauty of his captive, or there would have

have been no merit in restoring her to her lover. Now I am not enchanted with the beauty of Mrs. Montalbert, superior as I acknowledge it to be to that of most women I have seen; therefore I shall have no merit in acting by her, as I ought, indeed, to act, even if I *were* enamoured of her. But you know, Chevalier, that to me the most lovely women are become mere objects of admiration, like the pictures and statues of Italy."

"Indeed I do not know, nor can I believe any such thing, my friend.—For example, I know not how to imagine, that, if this lady had been an antiquity, such as you professed to search for among the ruins of Formiscusa, that you would have stormed the castle for her relief."

"It would not have been necessary; but in fact it is begging the question, for had not the lady been young and handsome, she would never have been imprisoned there. However, Chevalier, I trust that any woman in distress would have commanded my services, as I am sure she
would

would yours, merely because she was a distressed woman."

"My services are dedicated, you know, to the distressed of every description; but to damsels in trouble I can be considered of little more importance than their confessors when once my service is ended, for I am but a kind of military monk: but you, my good friend, at the age of three or four and twenty, are, perhaps, a protector for a very young and very pretty woman, who might be less exceptionable in Italy, than among Messieurs les Anglais."

"You do not suppose then (said Walsingham) that Montalbert can be such a fool, or such a brute, as to be displeased that his wife has put herself under my protection to escape from the tyranny of his mother?"

"Oh, no!—(replied De Montagny); I suppose nothing. I only fear, that being continually with such a woman as Madame de Montalbert; hearing from those beautiful lips, professions of gratitude,

tude, and gazing on those charming eyes, filled with tears of tenderness, it may prove, at last, a very severe trial to my friend's fortitude, when the hour shall come in which he must give her back to this happy Montalbert."

"Would to Heaven that were to happen to-morrow, (answered Walsingham, clasping his hands, and speaking with warmth)—would to Heaven it might be to-morrow that I could see her happy!"

"I wish it were, (said De Montagny drily); but if, when the time is past, you can inform me that you really felt, as you now believe you shall *then* feel, I may then proclaim my friend the most extraordinary man of his age in the three kingdoms of his master."

"I verily believe I shall claim your eulogium, De Montagny, and I here promise honestly to relate to you what passes in my heart at that time. Ah! (added he, with a deep-drawn sigh), you have no conception, my dear Chevalier, of the hold that such an attachment, as mine, to

a lovely woman, who is now no more, has on the heart.—I say, *you* can have no idea of it, because, designed from your early youth for the Order of Malta, you never allowed yourself to form such attachments as were at all serious; but *I* feel it to be impossible ever to love another, and all my hopes of felicity are buried in the grave of my Leonora.”

“ All that is very well. I am sure you now think what you say; but—we have read, and even seen, certain events, that dispose me to believe much in the influence of time and despair, as remedies for these violent passions. In short ————”

“ In short! (interrupted Walsingham); you don’t believe the passion can exist when the object is no more?”

“ I believe it is *transferable*, my friend, if not curable: I have seen—oh! I know not how many instances of it. You have read perhaps, or, perhaps, you have seen a little after-piece, on the French stage, called *Le Veuf*? ”

“ Oh!

“Oh! (exclaimed Walsingham impatiently), if we were to give up every sentiment as ridiculous, that your writers, or your dramatists, attempt to render so, there would not be left, in the human heart, one virtue to reconcile us to the misery of existence.”

De Montagny, who meant not to hurt his friend, seeing that he took the matter more seriously than was intended, let the conversation drop, and Walsingham, whose spirits were much agitated, went upon deck, where the stars reflected in the clear expanse of a sea so perfectly calm, that the vessel did not perceptibly move; the stillness of the night, scarcely disturbed by the slow rippling of the waves parted by its prow, and the mildness of the air, restored him to a more tranquil state. He bade the steersman and a boy, who was on the first watch, begin the evening hymn sung by the Maltese sailors. He sat down on the gunwale, and bore a part; the tumult of his spirits entirely subsided,

and he began to wonder how they had been so disturbed!—"But it provokes me, (said he, as he reflected on the matter)—it provokes me, that a man of such good sense, and so excellent a heart, should adopt prejudices so entirely the result of the manners of his country, and his own particular mode of education. . . . How *can* he, with sentiments so generally honourable, believe that I could suffer myself to feel, for this charming woman, any other degree of tenderness than might be inspired by an amiable sister?—No!—to suppose me capable of other views, is to destroy the pleasure I take in protecting and serving her; and why would he rob me of the only happiness I am now capable of tasting?—In love with Mrs. Montalbert, or in danger of becoming so!—Good God! how can he think so?—When I see her, I am calm and contented; when my heart throbs with recollected anguish, I hear her voice, and forget that I am miserable. She speaks of her

her husband, and I weep with her; she caresses her child, and I weep still more! If I loved her, the name of this husband would be hateful to me, and I should be jealous even of her maternal affection. . . . Alas! I know I have severely learnt what love is, and I am sure the sensations I now feel have nothing to do with it."

As if, however, Walsingham, convinced of this himself, was conscious of the propriety there was in Rosalie's knowing it too, he now took every occasion when they were alone, and still more particularly when the Chevalier de Montagny was with them, to speak in stronger terms than ever of his widowed affections; and that he considered himself as wedded to the memory of his adored Leonora.—Rosalie seemed to hear him with mingled emotions of compassion and regard; she pitied the anguish he felt, and respected the constancy of his affection. He repeated one of the tenderest sonnets of Petrarch, and then an imitation of it, which he had written; and Rosalie, not-

withstanding the advantage the Italian language gives to this species of composition, preferred Walsingham's imitation. De Montagny, an unprejudiced spectator of these scenes, saw that Rosalie's heart was at present secure ; but he every day fancied he had more reason to tremble for that of his friend.

At length, after being twice the time they had calculated on their passage, they landed at Marseilles. Walsingham secured a lodging for Rosalie in the most retired part of the town, where he hired a female servant to attend her, and he went himself to an hotel. Her heart thanked him for this delicacy ; nor was she less sensible of the kindness of the Chevalier de Montagny, who, purely from motives of friendship to Walsingham, and of compassion to her, had taken a voyage of some length, and attended to her the whole time with as much good-nature and humanity as if he had been her nearest relation. It was, therefore, with infinite regret that she bade him farewell, when, three days after her arrival

rival at Marfeilles, he waited on her, with Walsingham, and told her his ship was then taking up its anchors, and that, in the evening, he should go on board, and get under weigh for Malta.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE port of Marseilles was crowded with English vessels, for, after a war, trade suddenly revives. Walsingham, therefore, had his choice of conveyances by sea; but he doubted whether he ought not to propose to Rosalie making the journey by land to Calais. Long accustomed to travel, the method of going from place to place was indifferent to him, and his choice was usually determined by the opportunities offered of seeing some object worth notice that had not before fallen within his observation. As he had passed three times from the south of France to England, and every time by a different route, he had no curiosity to gratify, even if his attention to Rosalie had allowed him,

in

in the present instance, to think of any other object in his way.

When, therefore, he bade adieu to his friend De Montagny, which lowered and depressed his spirits extremely, he walked to the lodgings of Rosalie, who had all day expected him, for De Montagny had taken leave of her the day before, and she imagined him gone. New alarms had possessed her, on the reasonableness of which she wished to have consulted Walsingham, but it was evening before he came, and then with so dejected an air, and a countenance so melancholy, that Rosalie fancied some new disaster, she knew not what, had overtaken them, and was afraid to ask. Walsingham, however, told her, that, believing it to be her wish to reach England as expeditiously as possible, he was come to hear her commands on that subject; the whole purpose of his present visit being to know how and when she would depart.

“Alas! Sir, (replied she, hurt, yet hardly conscious that she was so, at some

nothing in his manner which appeared unusual.—Alas! Sir—I know so little of travelling, or of the advantages or disadvantages of different roads, or different conveyances, that I must refer myself entirely to you. I only know, that the method which would be the least troublesome to you, would, on that account, be the most agreeable to me — — — — —.” Her voice faltered. “Yet there is one apprehension (added she) that I have to-day been taught to entertain, which has extremely alarmed me. I am told that the small-pox, of a malignant sort, is at Marfeilles—if my child — — — — —.”

Walsingham immediately comprehended what she would say. “I intended (said he) to have mentioned to you, what, I find, some person has anticipated; it will undoubtedly be a reason for you to hasten from hence. I have, I believe, often told you, dear Madam, (added he, lowering and softening his voice), that I have no use for the fortune I possess, but that of assisting my friends. . . . Alone upon this earth,

earth, with no very near relations, nor any distant ones who want my assistance, there are no claims on my property, to me a great part of it is useless—you would give it value by using it. After such a declaration you will not suppose that the difference of expence, between a journey by sea or land, ought to be a consideration. There would even be an indelicacy in my naming the subject, had you not once or twice talked of expence. There is then only to consider, whether you prefer going by sea to England, or travelling across France to Calais, or any other ports; consult your own ease and safety, and that of your dear little boy."

Rosalie, still unable to decide, and still more unable to express what she felt of obligation to him, was silent for some moments, and then referred herself again to him. At length, having weighed the fatigue of a very long journey by land, against the possible delays by sea, for there was hardly any *danger* to be named at such a season of the year, it was agreed

that Walsingham should engage their passage in the most commodious ship he could find; and though Rosalie, who dreaded nothing so much as being troublesome to her benefactor, expressed but little of the anxiety she suffered about her child, Walsingham understood her, and, without saying he should do so, he took care to hire a vessel in which there was a surgeon and a stock of medicines. It had lately been engaged to bring over an English nobleman for the recovery of his health, and the accommodations and medical attendant, which had been engaged for him, seemed most fortunately at hand for Rosalie. The price demanded Walsingham gave at once, with a farther sum on condition that the captain should immediately depart, without waiting for any other passengers. Money is so forcible an advocate, that the captain was convinced it was his interest to comply with this request, and every thing was soon ready.

In little more than a week from her landing at Marseilles, Rosalie embarked
for

for England, having written from thence to Naples, and enclosed her letter to Montalbert to the English Minister.

During a very prosperous voyage Walsingham behaved to her with the affection of a brother; but as they had now lost the society of the Chevalier de Montagny, who used, with great propriety, to break their too-frequent tête-à-têtes, Walsingham lived more in his own cabin than he had done when they were on board the Maltese vessel, and was, or affected to be, engaged in the study of Arabic, in which language he had purchased some curious manuscripts at Marseilles. When these studies happened to be the subject of his conversation with Rosalie, he said he was making himself acquainted with Arabic, because, having already visited almost every part of Europe, he thought his next voyage would be to Asia. He frequently repeated this before the captain and the doctor, as they called, a surgeon's mate who was on board, and they, as well as the sailors, who heard the same thing from Walsingham's

ham's servant, could not but wonder that such a young man, who was happy enough to have so very pretty a woman belong to him, should be of so restless a disposition. That Rosalie was his mistress they none of them at all doubted, notwithstanding his reserved and respectful behaviour towards her; but he was too rich and too generous for them to make such remarks, as they would certainly have indulged themselves in, had their passengers been of inferior fortune.

Though to see England had been the first wish of Rosalie's heart ever since the miserable day that drove her from Sicily, though she knew all her friends she had on earth were to be found there, and though she had persuaded herself she should meet Montalbert there, yet, as she approached it, her anxiety became excessive; and when the man at the mast head cried Land! as they entered the Channel, her heart beat, as if, in a few moments, her destiny was to be decided. Now like clouds, doubtful and indistinct,
the

the white cliffs rose above the horizon; and now they gradually became more visible, till, at length, from the deck were discerned those towering boundaries of the coast; which——

“ Conspicuous many a league, the mariner
“ Bound homeward, and, in hope, already there,
“ Greets with three cheers exulting!!! ”

COWPER.

Rosalie gazed at them with eyes filled with tears, and silently demanded—“ Is Montalbert there?—Ah! do the friends—the few friends that love me, yet exist? ”—While Walsingham, though from different motives, seemed to be affected in the same manner, he, alas! knew, that England held only the ashes of her whom he had loved; but though tempted to say——

“ Sento l'aura mia anlica; e i dolci colli
“ Veggio apparir onde'l bel lume naeque
“ Che tenne gli occhi miei, mentr'al ciel piaque
“ Bramosi, e lieti; or li tien tristi, e molli
“ O caduche speranze, o pensier folli!
“ Vedove l'erbe, e torbido son l'acque; &c.”

PETRARCH.

Yet,

Yet, amidst this natural and just regret, which he had hitherto been proved to nourish, he was conscious that, if when they went on shore, he was to take leave of Rosalie, he should feel a new deprivation, which would make all his wounds bleed afresh.

This sentiment, however, he ventured not to communicate to her, nor had he ever yet found courage to ask her what were her intentions, or how she meant to dispose of herself after they landed at Falmouth, where he had engaged the ship to put them ashore?—When within an hour's sail, with trembling and hesitation, which he vainly endeavoured to conquer, he at last inquired to what part of England she meant to go?

Rosalie, though she had considered this before, had never steadily thought on what would be her best plan to pursue. Since, however, as it was now necessary to determine on something, she said she would wait wherever she landed, or in the nearest convenient town, till she could receive
letters

letters from Mrs. Vyvian, to whom she meant immediately to write, under cover to Mrs. Lessington, the only means by which she could be sure of a letter reaching her. The heart of Rosalie sunk when she recollected the state of health in which she had left her mother, and when her mind ran back to the many months of her absence, she trembled to reflect on what might, in such an interval, have been the consequence of that injured health, and of, perhaps, increasing anxiety. All her hopes were centered in her mother; from her only she could receive protection and comfort—from her only obtain information of Montalbert; till, therefore, she could hear of Mrs. Vyvian, she could herself form no settled plan.

She related as much to Walsingham as appeared necessary to account for her remaining in whatever part of England she landed, till she had answers to the letters she should write immediately on her arrival. He observed to her, that it would
then

then be much better for her to be at an easier distance from London, and proposed that, instead of landing at Falmouth, he should engage the captain to go on to Portsmouth, for which the wind was extremely favourable. Rosalie readily assented; since she should in that country be very near the place which she once considered as her home. One of those, whom she had believed her sister, was an inhabitant of Chichester, another resided not far from thence; and though she felt no inclination to appear before these her relations, while her situation was liable to misinterpretations, yet there was something consoling in the reflection that she should be within reach of some persons she knew, and who could have no reason, when they were informed she was the wife of Mr. Montalbert, to be otherwise than proud of the connection.

The same fears that had disturbed Rosalie at Marseilles, for the health of her infant boy, assailed her when she landed with him at Portsmouth. There was no resource

resource for that evening but an inn; this
 and many other considerations induced
 her to wish to quit the town as soon as
 possible; and now she thought with con-
 fusion and anguish of mind, which had
 been less felt while they were both citizens
 of the world, that she was entirely de-
 pendent for subsistence on the friendship
 of Walsingham, to whom she was already
 but too much obliged. How could she
 reconcile this to pride, or to propriety?
 Yet there was no remedy; for till she
 could receive answers from Mrs. Vyvian,
 what resource had she?—The conduct of
 Mr. Walsingham had been delicate and
 generous; the more she was unavoidably
 in his power, the more reserved he be-
 came. But though she knew her own in-
 nocence, and was assured of his honour,
 she could not recollect, without appren-
 sion, that she was now in her native coun-
 try; that she had quitted it without daring
 to avow her marriage, and had since been
 lost to all her former connections; that
 she now must appear in a very equivocal
 character,

character, and that few would listen to, and fewer still believe, an account of the extraordinary circumstances that had brought her into her present situation. Circumscribed, as was her knowledge of the world, she had seen enough of it to know that a very moderate share of beauty excites the envy of every woman who has less, and that there are crowds of gossiping people, to whom such a story, as her's appeared to be, would afford the highest gratification, and from whom it might excite the most cruel remarks.

To hide herself, therefore, from the eyes of curiosity and malevolence, till she could appear properly acknowledged and protected, ought certainly to be her determination; but whither should she go, and by whom should she be guided?—It was not possible for her to communicate to Walsingham the painful sensations these reflections brought with them; but he saw them in her eyes, in her manner, and he heard them in the tremulous accents of her voice—yet he knew almost as little as she

she

He did not know how to begin a conversation which every moment rendered more necessary. He sat looking at her, as she was writing to Mrs. Vyvian and Mrs. Lessington, considering what he ought to say, when, having finished her letters, Rosalie laid down the pen, and said, in a half-whisper, "And whither shall I tell my friends to direct their answers?"——

This, though rather a soliloquy than an address to Walsingham, gave him occasion to say, "You will determine, dear Madam, whither you like to go. You will recollect, I hope, that I have only to obey you, and -----;" he hesitated—Rosalie, speaking faintly, interrupted him.

"If I knew (said she) any village near this place -----."

"I mean not to dictate, (cried Walsingham, recovering himself). If you have no particular reasons for wishing to be near Portsmouth, I think any, indeed almost every, situation equally within reach of London,

London, and of a daily post from thence, would be preferable. I have heard you speak of having once lived in the neighbourhood of Chichester; it is at an easy distance from hence, and - - - - -."

" Oh! no—(said Rosalie), not Chichester—I cannot go thither. I do not (continued she) wish to have it known there that I am in England till - - - - -."

Walsingham did not give her time to finish the sentence, but said, " Would you then like to go nearer London, or to some retired place on the sea coast, where, at this season, there will be very few people, and where you may meet with accommodations, in regard to lodgings, which country towns do not afford? "

" That would certainly be the most eligible, (replied Rosalie). I have no wish to approach London, (added she sighing), till I know what hope there is of my meeting there, or at least hearing there of, Mr. Montalbert."

" Have M

"Have you ever visited any of these villages on the coast? (inquired Walsingham);—Is there one you prefer?"

"I was once at Eastbourne, (answered she, and it was at this time of the year. I remember thinking the country around it extremely pleasant, and there was then no company, or only one or two invalids."

"I know the place, (said Walsingham), and I believe you cannot fix better. It is necessary to determine, because you must give your friends your address before the post goes out."

"I will say then, that at the post-office at Eastbourne my letters are to be left.—But—I cannot help feeling uneasy that the wife of Mr. Montalbert should appear; perhaps I am wrong, Sir—but my situation is a very delicate one. I could wish my real name were not known till my family owns me ———" she stopped; but Walsingham saw she meant more than she had courage to utter.—"My dear Madam, (said he), that is a matter on which

which I cannot even give my opinion; your own good sense must decide upon it. You will determine, (said he, getting up and leaving the room), and when you have done so, I will set out myself to secure your accommodations, as I conclude you will go from hence as early as you can."

Left then to decide for herself, and having very little time to do so, she hastily resolved to drop her own name till she heard from her mother, and requested that the answers she solicited might be enclosed to Mrs. Sheffield, (the first name that occurred to her), to be left at the post-office Eastbourne. Having sealed and sent out her letter, Walsingham returned. He heard what she had done, and then said, that as she might now travel in perfect security, attended only by a servant, he would, with her permission, go on first, bespeak post-horses on the road, and procure her lodgings at the place she had fixed upon—adding, "I will give proper directions to Waters, (his servant), so that
you

you will have no trouble, and, I hope, not much fatigue. You will sleep on the road ! ”

“ If you think it necessary, (answered Rosalie); but I do not recollect the distance, nor the stages, having never travelled along the coast. It will not be necessary, I suppose, to sleep at Chichester ? ”

Walsingham answered that he thought Brighthelmstone would be preferable, and then said, “ I shall see you on Saturday at Eastbourne, I hope in health and safety; and afterwards (continued he, half-suppressing a sigh) I shall—that is, you know, I *must* take my leave, and once more, unless I can be of any farther use to you, become a dissipated wanderer, seeking for something that may supply the place of happiness.”

Then, without staying to hear those thanks which Rosalie endeavoured to utter, he departed, and in about a quarter of an hour Waters came to her with a letter, which he told her his master, who

was gone, had left for her. The man then desired to know at what hour the next morning she would be pleased to have the chaise ready, and, having received her orders, went away, leaving her to peruse her letter.

CHAP. XXX.

LETTER.

THERE are a thousand occasions in life, in which I feel that writing is better than speaking. When either the person I am speaking to, or the matter I am speaking upon, interests me greatly, I am the worst orator in the world; and, therefore, my fair fellow traveller, I write to you, for you must be convinced that I am deeply concerned for you and for your future happiness.

Though I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with Mr. Montalbert, yet I will flatter myself that, when we meet, I shall find in him another friend.

He must be generous, amiable, and candid, for he is beloved by Rosalie; but as we know not when he will return, and as I am, according to the opinion of the world, too young for a guardian, we must—ah! how cruel a necessity!—submit to the rigid ordinances of prudence; and, though I own to you that I shall relinquish the greatest pleasure of my life when I leave you, yet I mean to remain no longer at the village, whither you are going, than to see you settled. This, I know, is what I ought to do, since, however disinterested my regard for you may be, the world is too uncandid, and too little refined, to give me credit for possessing such sentiments. You are infinitely amiable, and I am probably allowed no more virtue than other young men, though I hope and I think I have never deserved the character of a libertine. . . . All this, my dear Madam, you could not say to me, but I know you have thought it. Half my acquaintance would laugh at me for saying it, but

but I am accustomed to do what I know to be right, and to disregard every kind of censure which is not incurred by actions really bad.

— With this turn of mind, and after what I have said, you will believe that I would not propose any scheme, merely to gratify myself, which should break in upon the regulations that seem necessary for your sake; nor will I, without your approbation, execute that I have in view. A friend of mine has a house at Hastings, whither he goes with his family for a month or two in the autumn, the only time when his engagements at the bar allows him to be absent from London. I once passed a few days with him there, and I am on that footing of intimacy which allows me to ask for the use of his house. He knows that I am an unsettled itinerant, and will not be surprised at my sudden appearance in England, although he has lost sight of me for eighteen or twenty months, and believes me either in Spain,

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Portugal,

Portugal, or Italy ; I shall tell him (what is true) that I am come home for a short time ; that it is not convenient for me to be so far from London as at my own house in the west ; and that this, united with a wish of being retired, are my reasons for borrowing his house at Hastings : I shall be within such a distance as to have continually the power of learning how and when I may be serviceable to you..... Will you then give me your permission to remain there?—My visits to Eastbourne shall be regulated by your orders, and surely the most vigilant and censorious prudery cannot object to the friendly and unfrequent visits of a brother to a sister. Oh! would you were really my sister, with what delight should I then avow the interest I take in your happiness ; suppose yourself to be so, I entreat you, and honour me by accepting the enclosed without ever mentioning the subject, lest I should doubt your honouring me with that esteem as to allow me to use the affectionate

tionate names of friend and brother, when I am permitted to assure you of the regard and esteem of,

Dear Madam,

Your most faithful

and obliged servant,

F. WALSINGHAM.

The enclosure was a bank note of a hundred and fifty pounds.

Rosalie, whose tears had fallen, she hardly knew why, while she read this letter, could not immediately determine how she ought to answer it. She had, it was true, time enough to consider it on her journey, but it hung upon her spirits, and drove sleep from her eyes. After placing, however, in every point of view, the intention which he so delicately asked her permission to execute, she thought there would be not only prudery and ingratitude in refusing her assent, but that it would shew a mistrust, which she saw as degrading to herself and unjust towards him. The money which he sent her gave

her more concern, yet she considered that it was less uneasy to her feelings to receive it in this manner, than to be laid under the painful necessity of applying to him for small sums, should she wait long for the letters she expected, and, till they arrived, what other resource had she?—The hope, ever alive in her heart, that Montalbert would soon return, and gratefully repay all the pecuniary favours she owed Walsingham, reconciled her to this temporary obligation, which she knew could be no inconvenience to him.

In the morning she arose, impatient to begin her journey, and sent for Waters to get the note changed in order to pay her expences; but he informed her, that it was already done, and that his master had given him directions for the journey in the same manner as when he travelled himself.

Rosalie, her Marseilloise maid Claudine, and the object of her constant solicitude, her child, were placed in a chaise, which Waters had hired for the whole journey,

to

to avoid the trouble and delay of changing the baggage, and they were very soon at Chichester. As she passed through that town, and sat at the door of the inn, while the horses were putting to, a thousand recollections crowded upon her mind. The objects, formerly so familiar to her, brought back the days of Rosalie Lessington, and the strange vicissitudes that had happened since seemed rather like the fictions of romance than reality; she was then the daughter of a village curate, humbled by her supposed sisters, and shrinking with terror from paternal authority, which seemed likely to compel her to marry a man she disliked. Her present situation formed a strong contrast to that she was then in; but was it better?—She was now the daughter of parents who did not own her, a wife without a husband, and the mother of an infant who seemed to have been born to misfortunes. While she indulged these mournful thoughts she did not venture to shew herself, lest she should be known; this precaution

precaution was fortunate, for just before the horses were put to her chaise, her former admirer, Hughson, mounted on an ungovernable horse, pranced up to the side of it. The beast was impatient to enter the stable; the chaise in which Rosalie sat was immediately before the gateway of the inn-yard, and Hughson, ever solicitous to shew his horsemanship, (though he now little thought to whom), spurred and irritated his horse; it began to rear and kick with a violence, which, for a moment, made her apprehend some mischief to the chaise that might compel her to get out. This fear, however, lasted but a moment; the contest between the horse and his rider, the latter of whom seemed much the least rational of the two, was ended, at least in that spot, for the former springing away with great swiftness was instantly out of sight, while the boys and people in the street, staring after him, exclaimed, "That Parson Hughson's horse had run'd clear away wi un."

Fortunately

Fortunately it was the contrary road to that which Rosalie was going; but the carriage had hardly proceeded ten paces farther before she saw Blagham walking with a gentleman of the neighbourhood whom she well remembered. She now rejoiced that she was going to a distance from these her old acquaintance, whose notice and intrusion it was improbable she could have escaped had she remained at any place within their reach; a consideration which had confirmed her resolution of going into the eastern part of the county.

The remainder of her journey passed without any particular occurrence or accident. She often amused herself by calculating the time when it was probable Montalbert would receive the letter which she had written to him from Marseilles; but this depended so much on circumstances, that there was no date on which her mind could rest with satisfaction.— The time when she might assure herself of an answer from her real, and her sup-

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poied

posed, mother, was more easily ascertained, and to that she looked forward with the hope of having much of her present uncertainty and uneasiness alleviated. Just before the chaise mounted the high down immediately before the village, she saw Walsingham watching for her approach. He did not, however, stop the chaise, but gave Waters a direction to the house he had taken, that there might be no necessity for her to drive first to an inn. Rosalie was presently set down at the door of this house, which, though the most retired, was one of the most commodious lodgings in the village; when her baggage was taken out, and the chaise discharged, Walsingham made his appearance. He inquired eagerly how she found herself after her journey, and how her little boy was?—then asked, if she approved of her apartments?—He told her dinner was ready, and solicited leave to dine with her, adding, that he had a chaise ready to carry him away as soon as dinner was over. All this passed with a rapidity which Rosalie

Rosalie easily saw was intended to prevent any conversation on the subject of his letter; and, indeed, she had neither courage or inclination to enter upon it at that moment. Dinner was served immediately; it passed in common conversation, Rosalie trying, but not very successfully, to bear her part. It was hardly over, and the servant withdrawn, when Waters came in to say that the chaise, his master had ordered, was ready at the inn. Walsingham directed him to put his baggage into it, and wait there till he came; then, turning to Rosalie, he gravely said—

“And now, dear Madam, it depends upon you to decide whither I shall go? If you think there is the least impropriety in my staying so near you at Hastings, I will direct my course to London. . . . Alas! (added he), no place affords me happiness; and I have at this time no other purpose than to contribute what may be in my power to yours.”

Rosalie, pained and confused, knew not what to answer. A sense of all the obligations

gations she owed to this excellent friend pressed heavily on her mind ; she believed those obligations had been conferred with the most disinterested views, and, cautious as he seemed to be to avoid every other interpretation, she thought that to insist on his wholly quitting the country, because she resided in it, would be not only a needless and absurd piece of prudery, but imply a doubt of his motives ; she was conscious too of her unprotected situation, and could not but be sensible that to have this friend within a short distance was a most desirable circumstance for her ; neither did she imagine, as nothing was known of her, and but little of him in this country, that censure could find food for its malevolence in their residing, perhaps, for a short time only, within miles of each other. After some hesitation, therefore, she told him, that such was her opinion of his good sense, and such her conviction of the real friendship he bore her, that she was persuaded she might leave it entirely to him to act as was most agreeable

agreeable or convenient to himself; at the same time she took from her pocket the bank note he had enclosed to her, entreating him to allow her to return it.

The conclusion of Rosalie's speech seemed to hurt, as much as the beginning of it had gratified, Walsingham.—“Ah! Mrs. Montalbert, (said he), can you talk of the few services I have had the good fortune to render you, and yet mention such a trifle as that?—I beseech you do not mortify me, by suffering any obligation of this nature to dwell on your mind.”

Rosalie, however, insisted on giving him an acknowledgment of it in writing, to which he unwillingly consented. He then entreated her to let him know the moment she heard from her friends; asked if he might not ride over some morning about the time she expected her letters, as he had sent for his horses. Having received her assent, and tenderly caressed her little boy, he left her with visible reluctance, and, going to the inn, threw himself into the

the post-chaise that was to convey him to Hastings.

Rosalie, being now left alone, endeavoured to calm her spirits, so long the sport of incertitude and anxiety. Nothing could immediately occur to disturb her transient quiet, for it was yet some days before it was possible for her to receive the answers from Mrs. Lessington, which she had so earnestly solicited. It might even be prolonged, if, as was possible, Mrs. Vyvian was in the north.

Rosalie found that every thing had been settled in her new abode, where the people of the house were to attend her. The woman was very civil, and seemed to have no curiosity to learn more than she had been told of her new lodger, whom Walsingham had represented as a young lady, his distant relation, who was in expectation of her husband from Italy, and that her stay at Eastbourne was uncertain. It might be only a few weeks, or it might be much longer. An uncertainty that af-

forded

forded a prospect of great advantage to the landlady, while the liberality, with which her terms had been agreed to, aided the favourable impression that could hardly fail to be given by the innocence, beauty, and sweetness of Rosalie's countenance and manner.

Claudine, carrying the infant boy, was the constant companion of her mistress's walks, which beguiled the greatest part of every day, and were varied between the green and shady lanes, open downs, or the immediate borders of the sea. On the sea itself Rosalie often fixed her eyes for hours, and her imagination went forth in conjectures about Montalbert, which became less and less pleasant as time stole on. From these pensive wanderings she constantly returned at the hours when letters were delivered, and impatiently inquired if there were any addressed to Mrs. Sheffield; but a week wore away, and none arrived; yet it was certain that she might have had an answer in that time; Walsingham too had reckoned the termination

mination of a week as a period when intelligence was almost certain, and he, therefore, availed himself of the permission he had received to come over.—Rosalie rejoiced to see him, and fought not to conceal the satisfaction it gave her, while he appeared more dejected and melancholy than she had ever yet known. He had now no object in view on which to exercise his benevolence; nothing to rouse him from the despondence which so frequently obscured the faculties of his mind; and to this cause, Rosalie, who knew from observation that he required some generous motive for active exertion, attributed the gloom which hung over him.

This heavy depression of spirits seemed to break away after he had conversed with her an hour or two, and, in proportion as she appeared uneasy at the delay of Mrs. Lessington's answer, he found reasons to appease that fiend Inquietude. At length they began to converse on indifferent subjects, and, during their walk
on

on the hill, attended by Claudine, who was always directed to follow them, Walsingham insensibly led the discourse to his own history and affairs. He talked of his family, and lamented, that he was left an isolated being in the world. " I have now (said he) no nearer relation than a cousin of nearly my own age, who inherits a very large fortune from another branch of my family, and from his mother, who was an heiress; but our dispositions and our pursuits are so different, that we never associate, and have rarely met in England but on some family business.—Sommers Walsingham is one of the most gay and dissipated young men about town; plays a great deal, and has establishments and connections in a style of expence, where I have little inclination to rival him. He was abroad when I was there last; the French and Italians, among whom we occasionally met, were so dazzled by the superior splendour of this my magnificent cousin, that they distinguished him by the title of Milor Walsingham, while I was
only

only Le Chevalier. I have often thought it singularly unfortunate, that the only remaining relation I have should be a man with whom I cannot be on a footing of friendship, especially as when I die, for I shall now never marry, he will possess all my landed property, which is entailed on the next male heir."

"I hope (said Rosalie) that you will live very long to enjoy it yourself, and then transmit it to a family of your own."

"There *was* (answered Walsingham) a time when I thought I might be so happy—but that is now over!—For me, all prospect, all possibility, of happiness is vanished—never, alas! to return."——

A long and mournful pause now ensued, which Rosalie had no courage to break, though she would fain have spoken words of consolation. Walsingham at last, speaking lower, and in a more dejected tone, went on——

"For every evil, but that which I have endured, there may be a remedy—but
the

the death of what we love!——Do you think there can be any sorrow so deep, and so incurable?"

"Yes, (answered Rosalie, believing that he found a sort of melancholy relief in this conversation), I think the estrangement of those we love may be almost as dreadful as their death -----."

She could not proceed—for she was sensible that should either of these calamities assail her, should Montalbert have deserted her, or should death have divided him from her for ever, she should totally fail in that fortitude which she wished to recommend to her friend; and finding her voice refuse to continue the argument with firmness, she was glad of the interruption now given by Claudine, who, coming near her, said, "Madame, Voila la belle Dame qui m'a si souvent loit depuis deux jours, et qui fait tant des caresses a notre petit."——Rosalie, who had hitherto avoided the very few strangers who were occasionally seen in the village, was now so near the person of whom

Claudine

Claudine spoke, that she could not escape her. But as she by no means desired to cultivate the acquaintance Claudine had thus begun, she hastily passed on, while the lady stopt the Frenchwoman, to whom she spoke in her own language with great ease and volubility. Her figure was very singular; she was not young, and her dress (then less common than now) was in that style which women affect who are above all prejudices, and look in a morning as if they passed their whole lives in the stable or the kennel; but though the habit and half boots might be symptoms of a masculine spirit, which some have believed to be the same thing as a masculine understanding, the pains which had evidently been taken about her face, which was very highly coloured, might convince the most superficial observer, that the toilet of this fair Amazonian was by no means neglected.

“ Surely (said Walsingham) I have often seen that lady; it is, I think, a face
familiar

familiar to me in public places; I cannot, at this moment, recollect her name."

"I hope (said Rosalie) I shall not be under the necessity of making any acquaintance with her; do you think she is staying here?"

"Probably, (answered he); but you may easily avoid her. . . . Nothing is more common than for people, who are, what they fancy, retired for a few weeks to some of these places, to live in a constant exercise of the most impertinent curiosity. Oh! I believe I now recollect who that is."

"She has sometimes a friend with her, (said Rosalie), a younger woman, and of a less manlike appearance; but though they live, as Claudine tells me, in the same house, and the other scorns to be a sort of companion, I observe she is often sitting with a book in her hand, and frequently seems meditating or composing."

To this Walsingham did not answer, and, during the rest of their walk, which
Walsingham

Walsingham fought purposely to lengthen by going about the woody environs of the nobleman's house * in the neighbourhood, he appeared to sink into more than his former dejection. It was now late in the month of June, and the sun was declining in all the radiance of that delicious month; Rosalie, to whose recollection it brought the evening sky, which she had so often, with a despairing heart, contemplated from Formiscusa, made some remark on the beauty of the scene; to which Walsingham, looking a moment earnestly and mournfully in her face, said sighing, yet with a kind of impatient quickness——

“ Ah! do not talk to me of the splendour of the sun—of the beauty of nature! All—all is dead to me!—I enjoy nothing-----” then pausing, he added, in a low and plaintive voice——

* Lord George Cavendish's.

" Mon Cœur n'a plus rien sur la terre
 " Je ne peux plus aimer, je ne peux mourir
 " Pune et sainte amitié, doux charme de la vie
 " Je t'immolai l'amour ; mais qu'il m'en coûté
 " Rends du moins le repos a mon âme flétrie
 " On dit que tu suffis pour la félicité
 " Loin de me soulager, tu comble ma misère
 " Je remplis mon destin, je suis nés pour souffrir.
 " Mon cœur n'a plus rien sur la terre
 " Je ne peux plus aimer ; je ne peux mourir."

Then pausing, he repeated the last lines with some little variation——

" Mon cœur n'a plus rien sur la terre
 " Ah ! je n'ose plus aimer, et ne peux mourir."

Rosalie, who understood perfectly the force of these pathetic lines, could not help being sensibly affected. She did not know they were a quotation * ; and was at once surprised and pained by the particular manner in which the two last lines were a second time spoken. Equally unwilling and unable to make any remarks on what she had heard, and Walsingham

* From the Galatie of the Chevalier de Florian.

appearing to be disinclined to converse, they both continued silent till they reached a place where one path led to the inn, and another to the habitation of Rosalie; Walsingham there wished her a good evening, and telling her he should be over again soon, to know if her letters were arrived, he departed.

CHAP. XXXI.

ANOTHER week passed, and no letters!—Rosalie, who became every hour more uneasy, now wished to consult Walsingham whether she ought not to write again, and was even forming schemes to find Charles Vyvian, who might, perhaps, be in England, in which case her friend could greatly have assisted her, but Walsingham appeared not. In the mean time, in her walks, Rosalie continually met the lady who had made an acquaintance with her little boy, and, who often courtesying to her as they passed, engaged her almost unavoidably to return the civility. Her abode, indeed, was no longer so retired as it had been.

In proportion as the summer advanced, several families, who shunned the more

gay and populous bathing places, arrived; and though none of them, except the lady in question, appeared at all disposed to make any acquaintance, Rosalie, who fancied herself the object of curiosity, was compelled to seek walks, more distant from the village, among the fields that arose behind it, or on a part of the sands farther from the general resort.

Every hour of her life was now embittered by increasing anxiety; for another, another, and another day passed without the answer she expected from Mrs. Lessington. At length she received, to her utter dismay and confusion, the letters she had herself written. That to Mrs. Lessington had been opened at the post-office, and was now sealed with the office seal, while on the cover was written——“*No such person at Hampstead;*” and again, “*Left Hampstead, no direction to be got whither gone.*”——The enclosure to Mrs. Vyvian was unopened.

The consternation and distress of Rosalie were now extreme, nor did she know
what

what steps to take. After so many days of anxious suspense, she was farther than ever removed from the hopes of procuring that protection which she felt to be every day more necessary ; farther than ever removed from access to the only channel by which she might hope for intelligence of Montalbert, she now repented that she had felt so much reluctance to see or write to Mr. and Mrs. Blagham in her way from Portsmouth, and that she had not written, on her first arrival, to her other (some time) sister, Mrs. Grierson, either of whom could have informed her of Mrs. Lessington's having left Hampstead ; a circumstance which had never occurred to her as possible, because not very probable.

To repair as immediately as she could an error, which she now suspected had arisen from false pride and false shame, she thought, although late, of making these applications ; but having been so much accustomed to rely on the opinion of Walsingham, she hesitated whether she

ought to take any measure without his participation. So many days had elapsed without his coming, that she thought he was, perhaps, gone to London, or had other engagements, and that his return might be uncertain. Indeed were he to be consulted, it would be impossible for him to give his opinion, since he neither knew the singular situation Rosalie was in as to her real mother, or the characters of the persons to whom she thought of applying. She recollected them, at least those of Blagham and his associates, with pain. If they appeared disgusting to her, when she had hardly been in societies of more elegance, they were likely to appear insupportable now that she had been accustomed to the intelligence and polished manners of Montalbert and Walsingham, to whom might be added Alozzi and De Montagny, who were men of fashion in their respective countries. But this contrast was not all that was likely to make Blagham appear disgusting to her; she dreaded his coarse raillery on her

her sudden departure from England, which she knew had been told in a manner very different from the truth, while the events she had to relate, as leading to her present circumstances, were so uncommon, and so little within the comprehension of people whose ideas had never travelled ten miles from their own homes, that she imagined she should inevitably expose herself to vulgar ridicule and malignant censure. The absence of Montalbert, and the presence of Walsingham, might be equally injurious to her reputation.

To the lingering suspense, therefore, in which she must remain, unless she adopted this expedient, any thing was preferable, and she determined to wait no more than one day, in which, if Walsingham did not appear, she would write to Mrs. Grierson and Mrs. Blagham, at the same time, and nearly in the same terms, that she might offend neither. The day passed, and Walsingham neither came nor sent. That evening, therefore, she sat down in a very dejected state of mind to compose

these letters. Rosalie wrote with great ease and correctness; but, though what she now wished to express required but few words, she never undertook a task which she found more difficult to perform.

To address two persons as her "dear sisters," who, she knew, were not related to her, was extremely irksome; that title, when they lived together under the same roof, and were called the children of the same parents, had obtained for her but little of their affection, and now, that she had been long estranged from them, she was afraid it would not procure her common civility. If she was considered by them as returning in an equivocal situation, they might repulse her as likely to need pecuniary assistance; if, on the contrary, she represented herself as the wife of Montalbert, a man whose fortune and rank in life was so much superior to those of the men they had married, she was sure of exciting their envy and indignation.— It was better, however, to be envied than pitied, and, knowing herself to be Montalbert's

talbert's wife, she could not determine to appear in any other light, repenting that she had ever called herself by another name, for which she now thought her reasons were not sufficiently strong, and had been too hastily adopted.

At length she finished her two letters; in each of which she briefly stated her being returned to England without her husband, a circumstance which had arisen from events too tedious to relate; and she concluded with requesting to know where Mrs. Lessington was to be heard of, and whether her brother William, (the eldest Lessington, to whom she gave that name without reluctance), was still at Oxford. The uncertainty of this, as he was in expectation of a college living when she left England, was the only reason why she did not first apply to him.

Amid the extreme disquiet, which Rosalie was in about her mother, she could not but feel wonder and uneasiness at the long absence of Walsingham, who had now been more than a week without see-

ing her. The recollection of the melancholy state of mind, in which he last parted from her, added to her concern; for she fancied he might be ill, and she was too sure he was unhappy. Yet she saw the impropriety of communicating these fears to him, or even of expressing impatience at his not coming, when he might, perhaps, have other engagements; she knew, therefore, that she ought to wait, without impatience, his promised visit.

The little Montalbert was now between six and seven months old, and, from his strength and size, appeared to be more. Claudine was extremely fond and very careful of him, and was often entrusted with the care of him during a short walk, while Rosalie, who dreaded the observations that she found were made upon her, confined herself more to the house.

Claudine, who was a lively Provinciale, was by no means so averse to society; and, though her mistress always directed her to go with the child into the most unfrequented

unfrequented walks, she generally contrived to find some admirable reason for chusing that where she was sure to meet
 “ Des beaux Messieurs tres poli, ou quelques dames bien honnête ; qui parloient un peu le Francois, et qui avoient tant, mais tant de bontis, pour elle, et tant de joli choses, a dire a son petit bon homme que c’etoit une charme.”

Rosalie knew that her maid could tell nothing of her real situation, because she was ignorant of it, but she feared infinitely more what she might imagine, though the girl was always told that Mr. Walsingham was only a friend, who had taken care of her to England ; and, though she had never seen any circumstance in his behaviour to contradict such an idea, yet Rosalie fancied she had, more than once, marked a sort of arch incredulity in the features of Claudine : but as she could not set about assuring her he was a mere friend, because that would rather confirm than avert suspicion, she contented herself

with forbidding her to answer any questions that might be made by strangers, doubting, however, whether she would obey the injunction.

Rosalie, who saw new faces arrive at the place every day, occasionally formed wishes for a residence more secluded.— Yet when she considered that as soon as she could obtain intelligence of her mother, she should probably remove nearer to her; and when she adverted to the convenience of being in the house with very civil and quiet people, she thought herself hardly authorised to propose a change. She should undoubtedly have an answer very soon from one, or both her sisters, which might put an end, at least in a great measure, to her present uncertainty.

Three days, however, passed before she found at the post-office the following letter——

“ Dear

" DEAR MADAM,

" THEY say that wondering makes one grow old, so my Kate and I will not wonder, but must confess ourselves a little surpris'd at hearing you were so near us, and had stolen a march upon us, when we thought you were among your Signors and Signoras, Italianos, and people quite out of our line; and my Kate is not so ready in the writing way as some ladies, (which I don't reckon among her faults I promise you), so you'l excuse my replying to yours of 2d inst.—To be sure you must have dropped from the clouds, and have been quite in terra incognita, not to know that our good mother has quitted Hampstead these five or six months. I settled her affairs there for her when I went up on the matter of Poulcat versus Perriwinkle last Hilary; and she went to live with her son Francis, who, you know, was always a sort of favourite; but there was a rumpus at the house of Crab and
Widget

Widgett, and he quitted and settled with his new-married wife at Carlisle. Sir Francis*, when the King pleases, has picked up a pretty fortune I assure you, and is better off than our Episcopus, who has also married a wife, and so lost his fellowship; but he's got a living, though a small one, and I dare say will have a house full of sons and daughters. As to our olive branches, they flourish and increase, and my Kate has no chance of seeing much of the world this year, as we expect a third before its end; but as I must be at Grinstead, in a few days, for the summer assize, where I've three capital causes, I'll just peep upon you in my way. As to the Vyvians, you know, they are grand folks, much above our cut, so that we know nothing of them more than what every body knows. I heard that there *was* treaties going forward for the

* By these names Mr. Blagham distinguished the two sons of Mr. Lessington.

sale of Holmwood, but the entail made by *old* Montalbert could not be dock'd till the heir is of age; and they say he's not over and above willing to accommodate Papa and Mama: but more of this when we meet.—I am somewhat at a non plus how to direct, as my Kitty and I wonder why you should have an alias to your name; but I suppose you have good reasons.

I am, dear Madam,

Your humble servant,

JASPER BLAGHAM.

Chichester,

July 4, 1784."

The other letter ran thus:—

"MADAM,

"YOUR's we received.—My wife not being very well, this serves to inform you that Mrs. Lessington is at Carlisle, at Mr. Frank's, who is gone to live there, and she with him. I do not know that any other direction is required. My
wife

wife heard from her about six weeks ago; she was then in good health: wishing the same to you, with my wife's love and service,

I am, Madam,

Your very humble servant,

DANIEL GRIERSON.

Brockhurst Upton Farm,

July 4, 1784."

Though Rosalie had no reason to expect any other kind of letters than these from her two brothers-in-law, or rather those whom she had supposed such, her heart, naturally tender and affectionate, sunk in chill despondence when she reflected on the little regard there seemed to exist for her, among persons who had been accustomed to consider her as of their own blood; and who, she believed, had never been undeceived.—“ Surely, (said she), had one of them been cast alone and unprotected into my neighbourhood, I should not have hesitated a moment in
flying

flying to their assistance."——Alas! had she known more of the world, she would have found this conduct of her supposed family too common to excite a moment's wonder; she would have seen that the man of law desired to reconnoitre her situation before he ventured even to profess kindness, lest he should find her in circumstances that might make such kindness expensive; while the gentleman farmer had no inclination to invite to his house a relation of his wife's, who was either humbled enough to give them some trouble, or in a style of life to mortify his wife by superior elegance, and give her occasion to make comparisons which might render her, who had been reckoned a great beauty, discontented with the inferior lot she had chosen. The coldness, however, of these letters, gave her only momentary pain; but she reflected with longer and more acute uneasiness, that the intelligence she had gained was not only unsatisfactory, but such as baffled the
 hopes

hopes she had entertained of being under the protection of Mrs. Vyvian. She now was almost determined to write immediately to her mother, but the caution she had received, and the dread lest her youngest daughter might be at the house, made her hesitate. It was possible too that Mrs. Vyvian might be removed from Hampstead, and to either of Mr. Vyvian's houses it was impossible for her to direct. One sentence in Blagham's letter was at once puzzling and alarming. It seemed to intimate not only a design on the part of Vyvian to sell Holmwood, which she thought would give infinite pain to his wife, but it intimated a dissention between the mother and the son, which appeared to Rosalie quite incomprehensible.

All, however, that could now be done, was to write to Mrs. Lessington; but she knew it must be at least ten days before she could have an answer. Almost worn out by the cruel suspense she had

had so long been in, and feeling every hour an increasing distress about Montalbert, she looked forward with sensations of the deepest despondence, even to such an interval of solicitude and anxiety.

CHAP. XXXII.

THREE of these sad days were passed without any change in the situation of Rosalie; early on the morning of the fourth Walsingham appeared.

The moment he approached her she was struck with the expression of his countenance, where despair rather than dejection was marked; and, as intelligence relative to Montalbert was ever present to her mind, she was struck with the idea that Walsingham had learned, and was come to communicate, some evil that had befallen her husband. Without giving herself time to consider the probability of this, she advanced hastily towards him, and, with extreme emotion, inquired what sad tidings he brought her?—Walsingham,

ham, who perhaps rather expected a gentle reproach, for his long absence, than this sudden interrogatory, answered, dejectedly and somewhat coldly—"What have I to tell you, my dear Madam?—Alas! I have nothing *new* to tell you!"

Rosalie, checked and hurt by his manner and his answer, and not able immediately to recover herself from the emotion which she had felt, could only say faintly, "I beg your pardon; I thought—I fancied—I am so unhappy, (added she), that every thing alarms me."

She sat down, and Walsingham, moved by the sight of her distress, advanced towards her, and said, "If I had learnt any good news, my amiable friend, I should not have been absent so long, for I should have been eager to have communicated whatever might give you pleasure; if bad news that related to you, so unwilling am I to give you pain, that I fear, *at this time*, my spirits would shrink from so cruel, though, perhaps, so necessary an exertion of friendship."

"Have

“ Have you *yourself* any new cause of uneasiness? (inquired Rosalie in a low and faltering voice)—I hope not! ”

“ Ah! Mrs. Montalbert, (replied Walsingham), does there then need any new cause?—Does, indeed, my unhappiness admit of addition? ”

Rosalie, still doubting whether some calamity was not known to Walsingham which he had not the courage to tell her, related, in a few words, the circumstances that occurred since they last met; of her having the letter returned that she had sent to Mrs. Lessington, and the unsatisfactory answers she had received from Mr. Blagham and Mr. Grierson.—Walsingham read the two letters, and then said, “ But what, my dear Madam, could you expect from these sort of people—I am sorry you applied to them.”—Then thinking that he had spoken too contemptuously of Rosalie’s relations, he added, “ I only mean to say, that, from the slight sketches you have give me of these gentlemen
gentlemen

gentlemen in our desultory conversations on your affairs, it appears as if they were of an order of beings so different from her to whom I have the honour to speak, that nothing more than common civility could be expected of them."

" Their letters, I think, (said Rosalie, forcing a smile), hardly amount to that; but perceiving I had only to repair, as expeditiously as I could, the delay that has arisen, I have written to Mrs. Lessington according to the direction I obtained."

Walsingham then turned the conversation on indifferent subjects; but his thoughts appeared to be distracted, and his heart heavy. The morning was well calculated for exercise, for the sun, which was at that season too powerful at an early hour, was obscured by clouds, though without any immediate appearance of rain or storm—Rosalie, therefore, proposed to Walsingham a walk on the Downs, flattering herself that the gloom on his spirits might be dissipated by the pleasure he usually took
in

in pointing out, with a degree of enthusiasm peculiar to himself, the various appearances of the sea, or the changing shadows of the landscape. Walsingham of course declared himself ready to wait on her, and they were just leaving the house, followed as usual by Claudine, when a smug pert figure came up to them, who looked as if he took great pains to appear like a gentleman, with very little success. To Walsingham he was unknown; but Rosalie immediately recognised Mr. Blagham, who, not at all abashed by seeing a stranger with her, pranced up to her, exclaiming, "Ah! my sweet sister-in-law, I have met you then at last! Long-parted friends, you know, (continued he, familiarly saluting her)—with this gentleman's leave, who, I suppose, is your spouse."—Rosalie, covered with blushes, answered coldly, "No, Sir—that is *not* Mr. Montalbert;" and then asking after Mrs. Blagham, she invited him in, though heartily wishing that he might not accept the invitation.

"But

“ But you were going to walk, (said he)—I beg I mayn’t be any hindrance. I can’t stay a moment—my head is full of business; a great number of causes I assure you. . . . You know my way?—Vastly anxious always—eh!—and have hardly time to turn myself about. Well! but you look purely, my fair Rose!—I can’t help remembering your former name, you see: you look charmingly—still as killing as ever—lilies and roses!—When shall we see Mr. Montalbert in England? ”

“ That is uncertain,” replied Rosalie, who saw that, as Blagham was speaking, he turned his eyes inquisitively on Walsingham, with a look, as if to say—Ah! ah! Sir, who are you? ”

Walsingham, suspecting that he might be the object of impertinent curiosity, and feeling already a decided aversion to Blagham, thought he should at once relieve Rosalie and himself by leaving her; he therefore said, that, as she was engaged, he would not now detain her, but

would take his walk. Rosalie did not know, and yet dared not ask, whether she should see him again before he returned to Hastings, for she had yet many things to consult him upon. She saw him go with regret, and it was not without an effort that she concealed from Blagham what she suffered by this interruption.—Forcing, however, an appearance of tranquillity she was far from feeling, and recollecting that she had now an opportunity of learning the particulars she so much wished to know in regard to the Vyvian family, she affected to listen with interest to the long detail Mr. Blagham gave her of his own affairs, which, he said, were very prosperous and flourishing; “and (then adding) you don’t know all I have had to do with your poor quondam lover, little Hughson. . . . —Egad! the poor fellow was over head in ears—in love—and, faith, in debt too. I had a fine time on’t with Old Square—toes his daddy, to make him down with the needful; but at last we got it all settled,

bled, and I patched up his pocket, poor rogue, though his heart was in a cruel plight for a long time !”

“ If he had had no other grievances, (said Rosalie), I think your friendship would have been put to no severe test ; but pray tell me how and where are the Vyvians ; I have been so circumstanced since I have been abroad as to have had no opportunity of hearing of them.”

“ Why, I can give you as to those personages but little information: for since the young lady came down to Holmwood, they have never once been there, and it seems she took such a dislike to it, that, as the family were never likely to inhabit it, the Old Magnifico was trying to sell it.”

“ What young lady? (asked Rosalie); I don’t comprehend who you mean.”

“ Why, the fine lady that he married—
Miss ----- Miss ----- the
Honourable Miss ----- ;—Well !
I have a vile memory for names. However, she was young enough to be his
H 2 daughter,

daughter, and belonged to a Lord's family, the lady he married."

"Who married?" cried Rosalie faintly.

"Why Old Vyvian..... He married in less than half a year——faith, I think they said it was not above three months after the death of his wife."

"Gracious God! (exclaimed Rosalie, thrown quite off her guard by this shocking intelligence);——Dead!—my dear, dear benefactress—my best friend——"

Stunned, by a blow so cruel and unexpected, she became extremely giddy, a cold dew covered her face, and she leaned against the side of the window on the seat of which she was sitting. Blagham, who fancied she was going to faint, began to call for help, and to ring the bell. Claudine was out with the child, Rosalie having sent her when she returned herself with Blagham; but Mrs. Hammond, the landlady, and her maid appeared, and the former, terrified at the pale countenance of her lodger, bestirred herself notably for salts, hartshorn, and water, exclaiming,

ing, at the same time, " Dear Madam, how ill you are !—Pray let me send for somebody.—Bless me I wish the gentleman was here—shall I send Jane to call him ?"—" Oh !—no, no !"—was all Rosalie could say ; but Jane, judging that nothing is so great a cordial as a friend, and having a very high opinion of Walsingham, from the liberality she had experienced from him, ran away without any farther orders, and Rosalie had not recovered from the first shock her senses had received, before Walsingham, who had not been far from the house, came in, and, agitated as much as the half-dead mourner before him, inquired, regardless of the presence of Blagham, what had been said to alarm her thus ; then, turning in evident displeasure to Blagham, he cried, " Surely, Sir, this is very extraordinary ! "

" I'm sure I think so, Sir, (answered the attorney, who did not half like the looks of Walsingham) ; for I had no notion that Mrs. Vyvian's death could have affected

affected Miss Rose—that is Mrs. ——— Mrs. Montalbert I mean, in such a manner, or I should have spoke on't more cautiously ; but some people are so nervous.—Come, dear Ma'am, cheer up :—why have a little more philosophy—we must all die. . . . The poor lady, you know, had been for a long time in a declining way ! ”

Rosalie, to whom every word was as a dagger, now arose, and saying she felt herself too ill to remain below, wished Blagham a good morning, and tried to add her love to his wife, with some other of these common-place sayings, that express much and mean nothing ; but finding herself unable to articulate, she leaned on Mrs. Hammond's arm, and retired to her own room.

Blagham in the mean time had his curiosity awakened, which he was determined to satisfy. Many doubts arose as to the reality of Rosalie's marriage. He found her with a gentleman, whom she acknowledged not to be her husband : he
saw

saw that he took a deep interest in whatever concerned her. . . . Who was he then, and in what situation was this young woman?—Why be directed to in one name, and yet acknowledge another?

Blagham now attempted to enter into conversation with Walsingham, who, disliking him too much to take the trouble of being civil at any rate, and now half-distracted by his fears for Rosalie, hardly gave himself the trouble to answer him, but walked out of the house, in hopes, that when he was gone, Blagham would quit it also.

But this was ill-judged, inasmuch, as under the pretence of inquiring after the health of *the lady*, Blagham now obtained an opportunity of making several questions to the maid as to the gentleman—who, he learned, came with her, took the lodgings for her, and often visited her; he heard too, that his name was Walsingham, and that he was, in the simple phrase of Jane, “A vastly rich gentleman, quite as rich as a nobleman, and prodigious fond

both of Madam and little Master, though he wa'nt no near relation, only a cousin, or the like of that - - - -."

Jane would have told more had she known it, but her intelligence went no farther beyond this, than that "Madam came from foreign parts;" for Waters, who was both sensible and faithful, had adhered punctiliously to his master's strict injunctions, and had never mentioned more of him than his name and his fortune.

Blagham, however, had gathered much for malignant conjecture, and, as the people, with whom he was travelling to East Grinstead, were by this time ready for their early dinner, he now quitted the lodgings of Rosalie, leaving his compliments and a message, that he hoped to hear she was better.

Poor Walsingham was in the mean time walking up and down a little sheltered lane near the house. He had never till this happened been so suddenly alarmed for Rosalie, and he now felt the full and painful conviction how much his affection
for

for her had exceeded the bounds he had at first prescribed, and thought he should ever have prescribed to it in his bosom. The death of Mrs. Vyvian, on whom alone, he knew, she relied for protection, though he knew not all the claims she had to it, seemed to have thrown her more than ever into his power, and made her more than before the object of his solicitude and friendship; and he was shocked at being compelled to acknowledge to himself, that this friendship was no longer disinterested. He had long been conscious, that, while he talked of his eternal attachment to the memory of another woman, he could have found consolation for every loss, if Rosalie had lived only for him; and this consciousness was the true reason why he had absented himself so long, in the hope that he might, by degrees, wean himself from the indulgence of a passion, which, if Montalbert still lived, was at once dishonourable and desperate. The ill success of this experiment had given him that look of melan-

choly, and of unusual depression, which had so much alarmed Rosalie when she first saw him in the morning.

Walsingham, from a rising ground, where he was not himself perceived, marked the departure of Blagham, and returned to the house.

Rosalie had, on the sight of her child, been relieved by a flood of tears, and her oppressed heart now sought still farther ease in the consoling voice of a friend, himself acquainted with sorrow: every prudish scruple vanished from the real distress of her mind; she wanted somebody to whom she might talk of her lost benefactress, and whose sympathy would soothe her still bursting heart.

Instead, however, of hearing from him such sentences of consolation as are usually administered, instead of being advised to have fortitude and patience, and recommended to submit to inevitable evils, Walsingham sat down and wept with her, and, without trying to check a sensibility, which most men would have blushed

blushed at as a weakness, he seemed to seize the opportunity of deploring anew his own misfortunes; though unconscious that Rosalie lamented the death of a mother, he thought the loss of the friend of her early youth was a calamity great enough to justify the sorrow she expressed. Violent paroxysms of grief are seldom mitigated by common-place arguments. Walsingham therefore acted, perhaps, more kindly, in yielding to, rather than in resisting, the first expressions of agonising sorrow. They subsided, and, though the tears stole slowly down her cheeks as she spoke, yet Rosalie was sufficiently composed to consult with Walsingham on the steps she had to take.

No possible channel of hearing from Montalbert occurred to her; she knew not whither to address herself to Charles Vyvian, or whether he was in England; and if the Abbé Hayward yet lived, he was also out of her reach: the changes that had taken place in the Vyvian family, since the new connection formed by its

master, had probably dismissed all the old servants from Holmwood. Thither, however, Walsingham offered either to go himself, or send his servant; as nothing better occurred to him than to attempt gaining some intelligence of young Vyvian, while Rosalie, who still thought Mrs. Lessington her only sure means of information, determined to wait an answer to the letter, which, when she was able to write, he advised her sending to Carlisle.

A silent and melancholy dinner, to which Walsingham staid without being invited, was soon over. He then asked Rosalie if air would not relieve the oppression, of which, though she did not complain of, it was easy to see hung over her.—“If you wish to be alone, (said he), I will go; but, if you will suffer me to walk with you, I will not intrude on your sorrows—I respect them too much.”

“I believe (answered Rosalie) I should be better in the air; but I dread meeting any one—indeed I am quite unfit to be seen!”

“You

“ You need not be seen, (said he) ; for by a path about a mile off, with which I am well acquainted by my former rambles along this coast, we may go without any hazardous descent down the rock quite to the sea beach, and from thence along under the cliff called Beachy Head, where I think you may be assured we shall meet no one.”——Rosalie faintly objected to this ; for, as she never went out unattended by Claudine carrying the child, she thought the walk might, in his account, be rugged and dangerous. Walsingham, however, assured her that the path he spoke of led down to the shore by a descent of hardly ten yards, and that not steep ; he added, with a forced and faint smile, “ I undertake for the safe conduct of little Harry, and you may recollect that it is not the first time I have had the honour of being entrusted with your boy.”——These few words brought instantly to the mind of Rosalie the scene of her departure from Formiscusa, and all her obligations to Walsingham ; his active generosity

nerosity then, his unwearied friendship since, arose sensibly to her recollection.—

“ Ah! when—(thought she)—when will Montalbert arrive to acknowledge our weight of obligation, and to repay as much as gratitude and attachment can repay this invaluable friend! When will my husband assist me in the task I cannot execute alone, of soothing his incurable sorrows!—when indeed!—Montalbert!—where are you?—what has happened to you?—why seek you not the unfortunate Rosalie?—She is now, alas! deprived of all succour but that of a stranger. Oh! come then—console with her the generous friend she has found—mourn with her the mother she has lost!”

This melancholy soliloquy silently passed without Rosalie's answering, or seeming to attend to, what Walsingham had said, though she slowly followed the way which he led.

They hardly spoke during their walk, except that Rosalie, observing the heavy cloud that hung over the sun, now sinking

ing westward, inquired of Walsingham, if he did not think there would be a thunder storm?—He answered, certainly not; and they proceeded still silently, for neither were disposed for conversation.

About half a mile to the eastward of their descent they reached that stupendous sea mark, the high cliff called Beachy Head, which is seen half channel over, and is the first land made in crossing from the opposite coast. On looking up towards its summit, Walsingham seemed to be struck with some painful recollection; he paused a moment, and said, sighing, “ Ah! how long it is since the sight of this head-land made my heart bound with transport—since the cry of Beachy! Beachy! by the sailors, after a night passed in struggling against faint and contrary winds, announced the joyful appearance of an old friend—but now all local attachments are at an end!—England is still my country, but I am more wretched, I think, in it than ever, much more wretched than when I am wandering about.”

Rosalie,

Rosalie, by a deep sigh, shewed that she sympathised in his unhappiness, and another long pause ensued.

“ In this cavern, (continued Walsingham, turning towards a deep excavation in the rock), Tradition says, a solitary being, of the name of Darby, took up his abode. . . . There are times when I am disposed to try some such experiment myself. I think I should enjoy the horrors of a storm, in a cave under Beachy Head. I can imagine the raging of the elements; the swelling and foaming of the mountain billows dashing on the rock; and the isolated hermit patiently awaiting the surge that should overwhelm him. . . . I could fancy, even now fancy, the fullen waves, which we actually hear breaking regularly and monotonously on the shore, to be the hollow murmur of the subsiding storm. The solitary man having escaped the tempest, ventures forth from his cave!—he heard, amid the whirlwinds of the night, the cries of wretches driven on the inhospitable coast, then he could not save them!—

them!—but he now looks along the beach for their said remains; he tries with his feeble hands to bury them. . . . He sees a drowned man, which, another wave will cast at his feet, he steps forward—

“In God’s sake, Mr. Walsingham, (cried Rosalie shuddering), forbear to draw such images of horror!”—“I will forbear, (answered he), if they distress you, Mrs. Montalbert, but to me they present not images of horror. . . . Ah! no—at this moment I envy those who are dead; I almost wish *I* were so!”

Rosalie had often heard him talk in a desponding style, but now there was in his manner dejection mixed with something of wildness, that made her tremble. Stunned as her mind was by its recent loss, every vague idea had force to torment her, and she now again apprehended that Walsingham might know something of Montalbert, which the agitation she expressed at their meeting in the morning, might have deprived him of courage to tell her; and that he was, by this unusual style of conversation,

conversation, preparing her for it; but a moment's reflection served to dissipate this fear. Had it been necessary to inflict another wound on her heart, it was not to a scene so remote as that which they were now in, that he would have led her; for he had seen in the morning how ill she could bear such intelligence as Blagham had abruptly given her.

Walsingham then was unhappy, more than usually unhappy, and from some cause which did not personally concern Rosalie. The gratitude she owed him, and the friendship she felt for him, now called upon her to rouse herself and appear less depressed, in hopes that *he* might become more calm. She tried, therefore, but evidently with effort, to speak on common and uninteresting subjects. In their former conversations, Walsingham had frequently given her easy lessons on botany, which, with almost every other science, he understood, she now, with a view to detach his mind from the subjects that so painfully engaged it, gathered a branch of the sea poppy,

poppy, and another of the eryngium, that grew among the stones of the beach, and began to talk of marine plants, and of those of structure more singular which lived under the waves; she remarked that these inhabiting the immediate margin of the sea, apparently formed the link between marine and terraqueous vegetables, and was proceeding thus, when, looking at her with an expression of countenance, which said, as plainly as if he had spoken it—"Ah! you would not now have found spirits to talk on such subjects, if you did not exert those spirits for me!"——he said——

"I am a miserable being to-night, and fit for nothing that belongs to science, or perhaps to reason. But as there are cold unfeeling mortals, who say, and perhaps truly, that poetry has nothing to do with either, I may possibly be the better disposed to read to you what I once wrote, not many miles from this part of the coast of Suffex. It was soon after my return from the continent, when I thought all
my

my fondest hopes of happiness would be realised, but when I found them vanished from my grasp for ever!—a friend, who loved me, would not suffer me to remain brooding over my sorrows, at a house I had taken, (ah! how fruitlessly taken), in London; but though it was late in the year, not far, indeed, from mid-winter, he was going to pass a month at Bright-helmstone, and he took me with him, care-
 less of whither I went, and only desiring not to be molested by condolence or in-
 quiries. For some time (continued Walsingham sighing) the vigilant kindness of my friend would hardly suffer me out of his sight. At length convinced that *I had courage to live*, he allowed me to do as I would, and the use I made of my liberty was to wander of a night along the beach, or on the cliffs, on which the sea is continually encroaching. After a long succession of stormy weather, with heavy rains, great fragments of rock fell on the belt of stones beneath: the crash of their separation and fall echoed along
 the

the shore, like thunder intermingled with the incessant roar of the wintry waves. . . .

My gloomy disposition was gratified in describing the effect of this, and thus assimilating outward circumstances to my own sad sensations——

“ The night flood *rakes* upon the stony shore,

“ Along the rugged cliffs, and chalky caves,

“ Mourns the hoarse Ocean, seeming to deplore

“ All that lie buried in his restless waves.—

“ Mined, by corrosive tides, the hollow rock

“ Falls prone; and, rushing from its turf height,

“ Shakes the broad beach, with long resounding shock

“ Loud thundering on the ear of sullen night.—

“ Above the desolate and stormy deep,

“ Gleams the wan moon by floating mists oppress’d,

“ Yet here, while youth, and health, and labour, sleep,

“ Alone I wander;—calm untroubled rest,

“ Nature’s soft nurse, deserts the sigh-swollen breast,

“ And flies the wretch, who only ‘ wakes to weep!’ ”

CHAP. XXXIII.

FROM the temper of mind which Rosalie was in, the lines she had just heard Walsingham recite in a full yet mournful voice, could hardly fail of affecting her; and, while he a second time repeated them at her request, the tears slowly fell from her eyes, and it might possibly have been some time before she was enough recovered from the mournful reverie into which she had fallen, had not she and Walsingham been equally startled by the sudden appearance of two females figures from behind a projection of the cliff, on a fragment of which they had been sitting. One of them suddenly advancing to Walsingham, said, " Upon my honour, my dear Sir, you must excuse me if I break through

through common rules:—but I do so doat on talents—I am such an enthusiast in regard to poetry!—Your name is Walsingham, I think—I have often had the happiness of hearing of you, and once of seeing you, at dear Mrs. Paramount's.—I should be mortified—oh! mortified beyond measure, if I supposed it possible for you to forget it!”

Walsingham, very little delighted with this bold and abrupt address, and recollecting at once who the lady was, determined to give her this measureless mortification.—He, therefore, answered drily, “That he was sorry to say his memory refused him the pleasure of acknowledging, as his acquaintance, a lady who did him so much honour.”——Turning from him with an air of pique, the admirer of talents then addressed herself to Rosalie, and, with confidence, not at all checked by the coldness of her reception, said, “I have been determined, my dear Madam, to make myself known to you ever since I first saw you, and your charming boy.

boy. What a sweet creature!—a perfect angel!—I was told when first I saw you, that you were an Italian lady of rank, which only increased my violent inclination to be admitted among the number of your friends; but my acquaintance, Mademoiselle Claudine, undeceived me.”

Rosalie, recognizing the lady who had so often spoken to Claudine, was never so little willing as now to make her acquaintance, and was, in truth, unable to answer all these fine speeches as the laws of common civility required; she, therefore, suffered the stranger to proceed, only muttering something which her new acquaintance deemed sufficient encouragement for her to go on talking.

While this passed, the other lady fiddled up to Walsingham, and, in the softest whisper of affectation, her head reclined, and her eyes half shut, said, “Is it then indeed possible, that Mr. Walsingham can have suffered the remarkable traces Lady Llancarrick must leave on every heart, to
be

be obliterated!—That wonderful being! whose talents, whose virtues, have been the admiration of the age in which we live—and whose person, worshipped as it has been and is, is the least of her astonishing perfections!”

Walsingham, however he abhorred every kind of affectation, might, at another time, have found a momentary amusement in the fine sentimental phrases and ridiculous contortions of this young woman. He recollected her to be a Miss Gillman, whom he had seen at parties in town, and who had acquired the name of “*The Muse*.” But he was at this time so disgusted with her folly, and so impatient at being thus broke in upon, that nothing less than the consideration of her being a woman, and in inferior circumstances, (for she was a humble dependent on the scientific dames of better fortune), could have induced him to even the little shew of civility with which he answered—“That it was his misfortune to have forgotten Lady

Llancarrick, owing, perhaps, to his long residence in other countries."——" Oh! then (eagerly interrupted Miss Gillman) you have never, perhaps, seen any of her productions.—She writes the most divine things!—there is an originality or sublimity undescrivable in her compositions—the effect of the strongest understanding guiding the amiable propensities of the softest heart!—She did me the very high honour to desire I would walk down to this singular scenery, where——

“ The beetling rock frowns o’er the foaming tide.”

For she is writing something wherein she thought the wonders of nature might assist her imagination. . . . We were sitting pensively together my friend invoking the muse!—and I waiting in silence the happy effusions of her fine fancy, when we were struck with pleasing surprise on hearing the beautiful lines you recited. They are, I am persuaded, from your own ingenious pen—

pen—I hope you will give them to the world.”

As little more was necessary in answer to this rhapsody than a bow, Walsingham now turned a sorrowful look towards Rosalie, who was suffering even a severer penance than he had undergone, and was much less able to disengage herself.—They had risen on the first appearance of Lady Llancarrick and her poetical associate, and were now walking towards home; but this did not promise to afford them the means of escape, for the ladies declared they also were returning that way. Little more, however, was required during the remainder of their walk than to listen: for Lady Llancarrick having now got somebody to hear her, to whom she thought all the fine things she had collected were entirely new, and who could not doubt of exciting wonder and admiration, was soaring into the most elevated regions—and common life and common sense were left at an immeasurable distance. She mistook the silence of Wal-

Walsingham (which arose from vexation and impatience) for profound attention and silent admiration. From the first time of meeting him, she thought him an object well worth trying to attract, and wished to find out the nature of his attachment to Rosalie; though, be it what it might, it impeded not her views, for it was one among her many real or affected singularities, that she pretended to have the most profound contempt for beauty, while her own figure and face betrayed the great pains she took to acquire or preserve in her own person the advantage she contemned.

She knew that Walsingham was reckoned a man of the first understanding and information, and was fully persuaded that Rosalie's youth and beauty would be weak attractions, when opposed to her charms, and those talents, which alone she thought had power to fix a man of his genius.

Lady Llancarrick began life as a young woman whom accidental connections had raised into society much above her fortune,
and

and who thought herself happy to be put on a level with them by marrying Sir Lodowick Llancarrick, a Welsh Baronet; but having unsuccessfully tried the charms of domestic felicity, she had, for some years, been one of those characters which the undistinguishing multitude have called—Veteran Women of Fashion—High Flyers—and other appellations which are doubtless quite undeserved. The “univerval passion,” according to Dr. Young’s description, was never more strongly exemplified—never did a female breast pant so vehemently for fame as that of Lady Llancarrick; and, after many struggles to raise herself to notoriety, she found every eminence pre-occupied that might have been obtained by singularity of dress or demeanour; she could not drive into the temple of Fame in a Phaeton, four in hand, without being incommoded by equal or superior skill—or ride thither without being crossed and jostled; neither could she leap a five-barred gate, or do many other feats to make people

stare, without having innumerable rivals. One avenue to immortality, however, was less crowded, and Lady Llanccarrick followed it: she became a poet and a politician—with a very moderate skill in her own language, she was certainly a singular, if not a successful, candidate for the Poetic Crown; but having neither the judgment that arises from natural good sense, or that which is acquired by study, her political opinions, and her poetical flights, were equally inconsistent and absurd. Together, however, they answered her purpose, for she became *wonderful*, if not admirable: some humble retainers of the *Tuneful Nine* were always ready to celebrate her genius; and she furnished so many paragraphs for the newspapers, that the editors could hardly fail of being grateful.

But with so much genius could she escape being susceptible?—Alas!—no.—Many instances were given of the softness of her heart, and many men of the very first world had been supposed to wear her chains.

chains. In proportion as these became fragile through time, she had covered them with flowers, and almost the last fortunate captive, who had escaped this charming bondage, was Sommers Walsingham; which, perhaps, from family partiality, inspired Lady Llancarrick with her present inclination to throw the same pleasing fetters over his cousin.

Perfectly unconscious, however, of her design, hardly hearing, and not at all attending to the excellent things she was saying, Walsingham walked by her side, accusing his destiny of cruelty in compelling him to part with Rosalie for some time, and to leave her in such a state of mind, without having an opportunity of saying to her much that he had postponed till he took leave, and which now appeared absolutely necessary to his own peace, if not for the guidance and consolation of his interesting unhappy friend. Yet, however, he wished to have a long conversation with Rosalie before he rode back to Hastings, he was so persuaded

that Lady Llancarrick and Miss Gillman had forced themselves thus into his notice, only to gratify impertinent curiosity, or find ground for malignant remark in regard to Rosalie, that he determined, whatever it might cost him, not to put it in their power. For a moment he thought of returning to her lodging, after they had shaken off their unwelcome companions; but, conscious that so unusual a visit must excite the invidious remarks of the woman of the house, and suspecting that Lady Llancarrick and her companion would watch his steps, he found himself compelled, on Rosalie's account, to relinquish the idea of seeing her again that evening; but rage and vexation seized him, and he no longer wore even the semblance of civility, though Lady Llancarrick did not, or would not, perceive it. Their way lay near the door of the inn where Walsingham's horses were put up. His groom was walking before it waiting his orders; he called to him impatiently, and bade him bring the horses out; they followed him
in

in an instant, when, approaching Rosalie, he wished her a good night, and said, in a low voice, that he would see her in a very few days; then, coldly bowing to the other two ladies, he mounted his horse, and was out of sight in a moment.

Rosalie, trying to suppress a sigh that arose partly from regret at his going so suddenly, and partly from recollection of the state of mind in which she knew he was, was now very coldly and formally courtesying her good night to her two unwished-for companions; but they did not intend to let her off so easily, and Lady Llancarrick, bidding her dear Gillman take the arm of her sweet friend, said, "Oh! we will see her safe to her lodgings, you know!"

The distance was not far, but Rosalie thought it now lengthened on purpose; both the ladies besetting her with questions which she could not answer truly, and would very fain have been excused from answering at all. Indeed, during the former part of their walk, while Lady

Llancarrick had engaged Walsingham, the gentle, sentimental Erminia Eliza Gillman had, albeit in the sweetest accents and with the most insinuating softness, put so many questions to poor Rosalie, that greater art and knowledge of the world, than she possessed, would have been necessary to prevent the fly sentimentalist from discovering that there was a great deal of mystery in her affairs, and that their obscurity arose from their being of a nature which she dared not reveal, yet knew not how artfully to hide.

When, at length, Rosalie was once more alone in her own parlour, all the events of the day revived in painful confusion to her memory ; but the death of her mother swallowed up every other sorrow, and, with a flood of tears, she accused herself of insensibility, for having, at such a time, suffered any other consideration to call off her thoughts a moment from that object of just and endless regret. Of the two ladies she had seen, she thought no more than to determine upon not continuing

nuing their acquaintance, and rather to
 quit the place than to associate frequently
 with people so utterly disagreeable.—Her
 heart heavy with regret, and her head
 aching from having wept so much during
 the day, she drank a glass of water and
 hastened to her bed, where the most tor-
 menting reflections, on the cruel fate of
 her beloved mother, long prevented her
 tasting any repose. At length wearied
 nature gave her up to momentary forget-
 fulness; but she had hardly slept an hour,
 when she was awakened by one of the most
 violent storms of thunder, lightning,
 wind, and hail, that she ever recollected
 to have heard. For herself she was un-
 conscious of apprehension, but clasping
 to her palpitating heart its only certain
 possession, her lovely child, she shrunk
 from the flashing fires which made their
 way through her window shutters; she
 endeavoured, however, to appease the fears
 of Claudine, who crept into her room
 half dead with terror, but suddenly, as
 she was reasoning with her maid, she re-

collected that, from the time which had passed since Walsingham set out, it was impossible he could have reached Hastings. Her apprehensions, lest any evil might befall him, and the idea that she was the innocent cause of his being exposed, became extremely painful to her bosom; she yielded to those gloomy thoughts which too frequently aggravate sorrow—and exclaimed, “Alas! *I* am so unfortunate, that it seems as if *I* communicated calamity to all who are interested about me. Born the child of proscription, *I* destroyed the peace of my mother, and on my account it probably was, that my unhappy father was driven into exile!—Should *he* have survived long years of calamity, *I* shall never behold him, never have an opportunity of expressing for him the filial tenderness *I* should feel, or of weeping with him over the memory of my dear, dear mother. Again proscribed in my marriage, *I* have, perhaps, undone Montalbert, and loaded him with the malediction of his mother. Perhaps—
oh!

oh! thought too terrible to be dwelt upon!—perhaps his tenderness for me may have cost him his life, and he may have perished amid the sulphurous gulphs and unwholesome exhalations at Messina.—No, I will not encourage such an idea. The precautions of his cruel mother counteracted it, and, by doing so, made my imprisonment and persecution favours.—Alas! I have present evil enough without dwelling on the past.—The noble-minded, the disinterested Walsingham, seems to be infected with my unhappiness; perhaps, even now, is the victim of his generous attention to me!—and you, dear little unconscious companion of my woes, sole sweetener of my sorrowful existence, may not you one day lament that you were ever born?”

This reflection was too distressing—and an ardent prayer to Heaven, that *she* alone might suffer, and that her boy might be as happy as she was miserable, ended the sad soliloquy.—The violence of the tempest abated, but not till morning broke.

Rosalie,

Rosalie, after a short interval of rest, arose; she heard from her maid, as well as from her other servant and the people of the house, melancholy details of the mischief occasioned by the lightning; of which some particulars were true, but the greater part much exaggerated, or wholly groundless.

Rosalie, still depressed by the idea of Walsingham's possible danger, and by the effects of a sleepless night, tried to shake off both her mental and personal uneasiness by a walk. It was an hour when she hoped that she might venture to the sea side without meeting either of the ladies whom she so much desired to avoid. In this, however, she was disappointed:—they joined her as she returned home; talked over the circumstance of the storm—Lady Llancarrick declaring that she enjoyed its sublime horrors, and Miss Gillman tempering the same sentiment, with delicately expressing concern for the fate of those who might have suffered in it.

“Apropos,

“Apropos, (said Lady Llancarrick)—my dear Mrs. Sheffield, do you know it came into our heads, as Gillman and I sat together looking at the lightning over the sea, that *our* agreeable acquaintance, Mr. Walsingham, could hardly have reached whatever place he was going to before the tempest came on:—he resides, I think, at some distance?”

As she said this, she fixed on Rosalie her fierce inquiring eyes. Rosalie, though no human being could be more void of offence, blushed deeply, and, before she could form a reply, Walsingham's groom came up to her, and delivered a packet with his master's compliments, and he had orders to wait for an answer.

Rosalie now saw, in the countenances of the two ladies, an expression which added, for a moment, to her pain and confusion. Relieved, however, from the uneasiness she had been in about Walsingham, she felt all the dignity of conscious innocence, and resolved to disregard

gard censure, which, whatever appearances might say, she knew herself incapable of deserving; she recovered her composure, and telling the servant she would return home and write an answer, which he might call for in a quarter of an hour, she slightly wished the two ladies a good morning, and left them.

Their curiosity, which was strongly excited on many accounts, they scrupled not to attempt gratifying by questioning the servant; from whom, however, they obtained but little additional information. While these ladies were thus unworthily employed, Rosalie read the following letter from Walsingham—

LETTER.

“ I was compelled to leave you, dear Madam, last night in an uneasy state of mind—for how could I be otherwise, when I saw you in such depressed spirits; and I fear your new acquaintances are
not

not of that description of women, with whom, either in the hour of sadness or gaiety, you would wish to associate.—I hope, that if you find them too much disposed to trespass upon you, you will not suffer the fear of violating the common forms of society to force you into the most uneasy of all restraints, keeping up a shew of regard to conceal dislike and disgust. I believe neither of them to be worthy of the friendship of Mrs. Montalbert. You know, I hope, that if this or any other circumstance renders your present abode less agreeable to you, my services shall be exerted to find one more eligible—but favour me with your commands immediately, as I shall go to-morrow to London, to plead with an old acquaintance of my father's on behalf of an unfortunate son, who, having two years ago married a young woman, whose only fault was her being destitute of fortune, has been abandoned by his family, and, having been brought up to no profession,

is

is in a very distressed situation, with a wife and two sweet little children. I met him a few days before I had last the honour of seeing you, as he is here with his family; I bade him consider what I could do to serve him, and he has desired me to see his father on his behalf: persuaded that I should succeed in restoring him to comfort and his father. Without having very high ideas of my powers of persuasion, especially when the hard-cold heart of avarice is to be moved, I will, however, make the attempt, and, unless there is any thing in which I can first have the pleasure of being employed for you, Madam, I shall begin my journey to-morrow early. My friend's father lives in Nottinghamshire.

" May the bearer of this bring me as favourable an account of your health and spirits as can be expected after the just concern you have so recently felt:—I hope you were not terrified by the tempest of last night. It overtook me on a place

of vision on me I quickened not my pace

so wild and dreary, that I could have supposed it the scene where Shakespeare imagined the meeting between Macbeth and the Weird Sisters. The spot I allude to is a wide down; in some places scattered over with short furze, in others barren even of turf, and the uncloathed chalk presenting the idea of cold desolation:—on the left is a ruined chapel, or small parish church, in which service is performed only once in six weeks; on the right are, in some places, marshes that extend to the sea—in others a broad spit of sand and stones, where nature seems to refuse sustenance even to the half-marine plants, which, in most places, are thinly sprinkled among the saltpetre of the beach.

“The hollow murmur of the distant sea, on which the lightning faintly flashed, foretold the coming storm some time before I reached this heath—there it overtook me; but as there are times when outward accidents make little or no impression on me, I quickened not my pace; and

and shall I own it without incurring the charge of affected eccentricity, that I found a melancholy species of pleasure in surveying the gloomy horrors of the scene—in fancying I was the only human being abroad, within the circuit of many miles—in cherishing the same spirit with which Young says in his Night Thoughts——

‘ Throughout the vast globe’s wide circumference
 ‘ No being wakes but me.’

Yet I was more moderate, and more philosophical in my sombre enjoyment ; and, when I came to my lodgings, I wrote what follows, which I beg you will put into the fire when you have read——.

“ Swift eet’sthe billowy clouds along the sky,

“ Earth seems to shudder at the storm aghast ;

“ While only beings, as forlorn as I,

“ Court the chill horrors of the howling blast.

“ Even round yon crumbling walls, in search of food,

“ The ravenous owl forgoes his evening flight ;

“ And in his cave, within the deepest wood,

“ The fox eludes the tempest of the night :—

“ But,

" But, to my heart, congenial is the gloom

" Which hides me from a world I wish to shun—

" That scene, where ruin saps the moulding tomb,

" Suits with the sadness of a wretch undone ;

" Nor is the darkest shade, the keenest air,

" Black as my fate—or cold as my despair."

CHAP. XXXIV.

THE pensive, or rather gloomy disposition in which Walsingham wrote, was but too congenial to the feelings of his unhappy correspondent, who passed the rest of the day in her house, indulging melancholy reflections. She was glad, however, that he was gone on an excursion likely to divert his thoughts, and knew that nothing so effectually won him from himself as such a generous service as he was now engaged in. The following day arose, and found her in the same dejected state of mind; left alone, without even the expectation of seeing Walsingham, or of hearing any intelligence, which, he assured her, he would not fail to attempt collecting as to Montalbert, or Charles Vyvian, she had nothing to look forward

to

to but the answer she yet hoped to receive from Mrs. Lessington; and she reckoned daily when the course of the post might give her, at least, this melancholy satisfaction.

A mind, thus preying on itself, agitated by hopes and fears, and wearied by conjectures, could only be relieved, at least, for a few hours by books of amusement. She had sent to the only library in the place for two or three of these sort of books, but finding them only pages of inanity, which could not a moment arrest her attention, she determined, notwithstanding her fears of again meeting Lady Llancarrick and Miss Gillman, to go to the shop, and endeavour to please herself better. In doing so, she was under the necessity of passing through that part of the village most frequented. Congratulating herself, however, on not having met any body, she was returning, with her books in her hand, when her former persecutors, suddenly advancing from their lodgings, joined her, and, with their usual
careless

careless ease, entered into discourse with her, asking several questions, and, when to evade these, she turned the conversation on the books she had been in search of, the elder lady delivered her opinion of several celebrated and new productions, with a fluency which astonished Rosalie, so much did it resemble a dissertation learned by heart, and remind Rosalie of Jenkinson in the Vicar of Wakefield, who, whenever he met a stranger, began with—

“ Sir, the cosmogony, or creation of the world,” &c. &c.

Rosalie, however, better content to be a hearer than a speaker, listened, or appeared to listen, with perfect resignation, internally resolving, however, to take her leave as soon as she arrived at the turning which led to her own lodgings, whether the harangue was finished or not; she walked, in the mean time, quietly along between the two ladies, (Miss Gillman having taken her arm), and gazing on the ground, as if she was counting the pebbles, when two persons hastily approached,

proached, and a voice exclaimed—"It is she!—it is my wife!—By Heavens it is herself!"—The voice was Montalbert's—Rosalie raised her eyes—it *was* Montalbert himself.

Almost unconscious of what she did, she sprang forward, and would have thrown herself into his arms, but he retired from her, with rage and resentment in his countenance, which suddenly changing into an expression of pity, he cried—"Lovely, lost creature!—art thou, indeed, lost to me?—Yes—for ever lost!—and here—too well convinced that all I have heard is true—here we part for ever!"

Rosalie, who had advanced towards him, heard all this with a surprize and terror that deprived her of the power of utterance. She tried, however, to say, "For mercy's sake, Montalbert, hear me!"—but seeing that he still retreated from her, and that seizing the arm of the person with him, he even walked hastily away; she made a vain attempt to quicken her pace and follow him, but her trembling

bling limbs refused to second her will—her head grew giddy, her heart ceased for a moment to beat, and she would have fallen, had not Miss Gillman, who, with Lady Llancarrick, beheld this scene with wonder, stepped forward and supported her.

In another moment she recovered her senses, and, looking wildly round her, exclaimed, “Where is he?—Where is Montalbert?—Lead me, if you have pity—lead me to him! Let me follow him—for God’s sake let me!”—Miss Gillman, with the common phrases used on such occasions, besought her to be composed; Lady Llancarrick began to reason, and to prove very logically that nobody ought to give way to such violent emotions. Her eyes, however, had followed Montalbert till he disappeared;—though when Rosalie eagerly inquired which way he went, it was a piece of intelligence she did not chuse to communicate.

Rosalie,

Rosalie, when her senses and recollection returned, desired to go to her lodgings, but, as it was evident she was incapable of walking thither without assistance, the two ladies of course attended her.—Miss Gillman, in the few intervals allowed her, spoke most sentimentally and pathetically, while the lady of superior talents affected to argue on the impropriety of yielding to extravagant expressions of grief or joy—not without some hints, that she could not comprehend how the gentleman they had seen could be the husband of Mrs. Sheffield, and yet be called Montalbert. Rosalie attended to neither of her new friends; she hardly knew who was with her; but, having formed a confused conjecture that Montalbert might be at her house, her eager eyes were inquiring for him the moment she came in sight of it. Claudine met her with the little boy; but Montalbert had not been there. In beholding her child, he recalled to her startled senses the conduct of his father, with his wild behaviour and strange expressions,

expressions, and all the agitation of her spirits returned; but she was relieved by a flood of tears, and sobbed violently—while such comfort or remonstrance, as the ladies thought might either console or determine her to bear her distress with fortitude, were alternately administered.—Rosalie had nothing to answer. She wished, though she could not propose it, that they would leave her as the only kindness they could do her; and at length, the one having exhausted all her sentiment, and the other all her reasoning, they went away, promising to call in the evening to see how she did. Rosalie assured them she should be very well, and begged they would not trouble themselves; she affected a momentary tranquillity, to escape from a repetition of attentions, which, as they appeared to be well meant, she could not rudely refuse.

When they were gone, the astonished and stunned mind of Rosalie returned to a new contemplation of the scene that had passed; when she recalled the countenance,

nance, the words, and the attitude, of Montalbert, it appeared, but too certain, that her actions had been misrepresented, and that jealousy and anger possessed him. How could she find—how appease him?—Whither was he gone?—He had come in search of her; was he then so prejudiced against her, that he would not even hear her, that he would not even see the child whom he had so passionately loved?—These reflections, pressing with painful violence on her mind, deprived her for some time of the calmness that might have enabled her to determine what should be done. She sometimes thought of going out to inquire for Montalbert, then found herself unequal to the dread of meeting him, whom she had so long sought and so tenderly beloved, only to have her heart pierced by sounds of anger and reproach, from a voice in which she had been used to listen to the fondest language of adoring love.—She had no servant who either knew the person of Montalbert, or had sufficient steadiness and sense to perform so delicate

a commission as that which she wished to have executed. The woman of the house, though older and graver than Claudine, was very ignorant, and to her it would be impossible to explain such a history as hers, and equally impossible to make her comprehend it. To her ever generous, considerate, and sensible friend, Walsingham, the thoughts of Rosalie naturally turned; but had he been still at Hastings, she could not have ventured to have asked his mediation. It was too evident, from the few incoherent words Montalbert had uttered, that his unkindness and violence originated in jealousy, and of whom, besides Walsingham, could he have conceived such injurious ideas?

Amidst these fluctuating thoughts one occurred to her, which compelled her to take some immediate resolution. If she could see Montalbert, when she was less under the influence of surprise, she thought she could talk to him calmly, and should be able to convince him that she had never, even in idea, swerved from the faithful
tenderness

tenderness she owed him: but to avail herself of this hope no time was to be lost. Montalbert might have left the village; and where was she then to seek him, that he might hear her justification. Impressed then with a conviction that she ought to find him instantly, she was hastening to leave the house, when the following note was delivered to her——

“THE father of the unfortunate child, known by the name of Henry Montalbert, requires to have him immediately delivered to the two persons who attend for that purpose, and who will conduct him to

H. MONTALBERT.”

Rosalie read this cruel order: she stood for a moment like the statue of despair—her blood circulated no longer; she was choaked by the convulsive struggles of her heart—but she could not weep, she could not even speak. The two persons, who were sent for her child, appeared at

the door of the parlour into which she had returned, and, at the same moment, by another door, Claudine entered with the little boy. Rosalie started up, and eagerly seizing him in her arms, uttered a few incoherent words—"They shall not take you from me, my child, (said she); let them rather kill me at once!"—Then, turning towards the man and woman, who approached without any apparent feeling for her inexpressible distress, she cried, her voice half stifled by sobs, "For mercy's sake, whoever you are, lead me to Montalbert!—Do not, oh! as you hope for Heaven—do not execute his cruel order, but let me find him—I will carry my child to him myself!"

The man, who had a countenance which seemed made on purpose to execute such commissions, answered, with sullen coldness, "Madam, we can say nothing to all this—we must obey the order of our employer—we act legally, and cannot enter into any discussion. . . . Come, Mrs. Jacklin, we have no time to lose."

So

So saying, he approached with his companion as if to take the child. Rosalie could only press her boy more closely to her breast, and, uttering a faint shriek, sunk with him upon her knees—"Have mercy!—oh! have pity upon me!"—was all she could utter. The unfeeling man, regardless of her agonies, or of the tears and shrieks of Claudine, who wept, implored, and menaced, forced the child from the convulsive grasp of its apparently dying mother, and putting it into the arms of the woman, they hastened from the house.

Rosalie, who had sunk upon the floor, seemed, as if by a miracle, to recover herself. She rose, and, with wild looks and swift steps, pursued the cruel wretches who had thus torn her child from her; but they were already out of sight; her streaming eyes sought them in vain; her head became giddy; her senses forsook her, and she would have fallen had not Claudine caught her in her arms, and supported her till the woman of the house

coming to her assistance, they carried her between them into the house, insensible and apparently dead.

She was now placed on her bed, and the remedies usual in such cases were administered; she opened her eyes, and, eagerly fixing them on the face of Claudine, inquired for her child. Claudine could answer only by her tears. The miserable mother then seized the hand of the woman of the house, conjuring her to go in search of him: but recollecting how little such a person could be interested, she attempted to rise herself, and again follow him. The women refused to suffer her, and endeavoured to appease her by promises of going themselves; but her impatience became greater, and she raved, entreated, and wept, till the violence of her emotions exhausted her, and she sunk in total depression. A few moments sufficed to recover her to a sense of her misery, and then the same sad scene was renewed.

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At length the woman of the house agreed to go out on inquiry, and something like hope suspended for a while the agonies Rosalie had suffered; but when the good woman came back, and related, though in the most cautious way she could, that the child had been carried away in a post chaise by the two persons who had fetched him from his mother—the unhappy Rosalie relapsed into all the horrors of despair. The whole night passed in incoherent ravings, in calling wildly for her child, or imploring the mercy of its father, while Claudine stood weeping on one side of the bed, and the landlady remonstrating and praying on the other. Before morning her senses seemed to have forsaken the wretched sufferer: yet her strength was so little impaired, that she again insisted on being suffered to follow her child. She directed Claudine to get her a post chaise; then attempted to rise and dress herself, till, giddy and sick, she sunk again on the bed. Thither the woman of the house had by this time summoned an apothecary,

the apothecary, who began gravely to inquire into the cause of the agitation in which he saw his patient. Claudine could not explain it, and the good woman knew not how, so that, from what she said, the apothecary, concluding she had lost a child by death, commenced a grave harangue on submission and acquiescence, which served only to add to the tortures of the unfortunate young woman: nor was this gentleman, who really meant well, her only tormenter. Her landlady had sent for Lady Llancarrick and Miss Gillman, who, taking each their station on the opposite sides of her bed, began to administer consolation, such as is usually doled forth in set phrases, with some difference, however, arising from character; for the lady spoke like a philosopher; "*the Muse*" like a sentimentalist—while Rosalie, unable to answer either, repeated to herself in the anguish of her heart——

"She talks to me who never had a son."
 So totally unqualified were all these parties for the delicate office of comforting
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the afflicted, or so unfit was the mind of Rosalie for receiving consolation, that, before evening, her spirits were agitated to a fearful degree; her reason was evidently wavering; and, no longer conscious of the inutility of her exclamations, she called incessantly for her child; then implored her husband to pity her; and from thence her thoughts made a sudden transition to the scenes she had passed through in Sicily and at Formiscusa; till, at length, all she said appeared so incoherent, and was so little understood by those who heard her, that they became convinced her senses were totally deranged, and, that these wild and incoherent appeals to persons, as well as her descriptive ravings about places, were the effects of a disordered imagination.

Lady Llancarrick, who was writing for the stage, contemplated this sad spectacle with the sang froid of an amateur, who hoped to add some strong touches to her performance; while her more gentle friend, with her attempts at shewing sensibility,

was

was considering how such an incident might weave into a novel ; but neither felt any true sympathy for the unhappy object, who, in the early bloom of youth, was thus the prey of anguish, which was reducing her to insanity or death.

The woman of the house, however, and the apothecary of the village, began, after the third and fourth day, to be seriously alarmed for the unfortunate patient, instead of recovering her recollection, continued to fluctuate between violent ravings and fits of gloomy stupidity, while an alarming fever continually preyed upon her.—

The ladies, who had at first appeared to attend her with patience and humanity, now slackened in their good offices: Lady Llancarrick found that neither Walsingham nor Montalbert appeared; that she had no chance of making an interesting or profitable acquaintance by her affected humanity, and that she might, perhaps, be involved in trouble, and even in expence; to both of which, but particularly the latter, she had a decided aversion. As to

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Miss Gillman, she had no will of her own, but contented herself with gentle repetitions of the words, " Poor dear creature!—Sweet unfortunate!—alas! how pitiable! "—While she occasionally addressed to her patroness eulogiums on her benevolence—" How good your ladyship is!—oh! what a heart, my dear friend, is yours!—what amiable sympathy for the distressed! "—These sentences were continually sighed forth from the delicate sensibilities of the sentimental Muse, and received by the lady as if she had really deserved them.

Ah! little could the consolations of such people avail towards healing the wounds of a broken heart. The unfortunate Rosalie every day became worse and worse. Claudine could not act for her; a stranger herself, and naturally helpless, she could only sit and weep by the bedside of her expiring mistress; or, when she appeared to have an interval of sense, ask directions of her, which Rosalie was unable to give,
or

or which, if given, were incoherent and impracticable.

The apothecary now consulted Lady Llancarrick on the propriety of sending for a physician. Uncertain how far the finances of the sufferer might answer such an expence, and fearful of being called upon herself to supply any deficiency, Lady Llancarrick would give no advice; the landlady doubted how far enough remained, in case her lodger died, to discharge the arrears that would be due, and to pay the expences which might be incurred; while Claudine, who had not the smallest idea of the mercenary principles on which these people acted, was continually imploring Lady Llancarrick to send for other advice, till, from this sort of importunity, she gradually withdrew; while Miss Gillman gravely held forth an opinion, that, perhaps, after all, this pretty young creature, for whom they had been interesting themselves, and whose adventures appeared to have something so extraordinary

traordinary in them, might be merely a girl in inferior life, to whom some man of fashion had attached himself, and, finding her unworthy of any long or serious partiality, had taken his child from her for very proper reasons. While these two good ladies were thus prudently settling that they ought to decline any farther interference, the illness of the wretched Rosalie increased to such a degree, that the apothecary believed, and her female attendants were convinced, she had not many hours to live.

CHAP. XXXV.

FIVE days had now passed, five melancholy days, since the sad victim of unjust suspicion had found no relief from anguish, but in her moments of insensibility. Her lovely face was quite faded and changed; her form emaciated and enfeebled, so that she could hardly support herself in her bed; sometimes she wildly started up, looked round her, and inquired for her child, until some degree of recollection sunk her again into the torpor of despair.

It was on the evening of the last of these days that three gentlemen, attended by servants, stopped in a post coach at the door of the house, and inquired for Mrs. Montalbert. The landlady, who hoped that their arrival would put an end

to her apprehensions of pecuniary loss, eagerly assured them that the lady was there ; she was very ill to be sure—" But I will call Mam'selle, her maid, (added the good woman) ; and, for certain, Madam, will be glad to see her friends."

The three strangers, on this information, left their coach, and entered the parlour. One of them appeared to suffer from ill health ; he was pale and fallow, and, though yet in the middle of life, seemed to have been the victim of sorrow or disease. The second had the habit and air of a clergyman ; and the last was a young man, apparently of fashion, who might have been taken for the son of the one, and the pupil of the other.

Claudine, who, amidst all her solicitude for her mistress, never lost sight of a little personal vanity, staid to adjust her cap at the glass, to put a little powder in her hair, and a nicer fichu on her shoulders ; and then expecting certainly to see Mr. Walsingham, whom she considered, in some measure, as her master, she fluttered
down

down into the room, where, in his place, she beheld three gentlemen who were entirely strangers to her.

The elder of them began to question her on the situation of her lady ; but finding she understood little English, the younger, who spoke like a native of France, took up the inquiry, and heard, with great apparent concern, the sad account of Rosalie's health, which even the warmth and earnestness of Claudine's manner could but little exaggerate. Each of her auditors seemed almost equally affected, and each inquired whether she could conduct them to her mistress. Claudine, not knowing what to do, and having no idea of who these people could be, answered, in visible alarm, that she would go and inquire ; forgetting, at that moment, that her poor mistress was probably incapable of attending to any question she might put to her, and certainly incapable of conversing with strangers.

It was in vain she spoke to Rosalie ; she attended not to her. At length Claudine

Claudine thought of a stratagem she had before used with some success, when it was necessary to rouse her unhappy mistress to temporary exertion—she spoke of her child; and Rosalie, who had appeared totally insensible for some moments, raised her languid head on her arm, and fixing her dim eyes on Claudine, faintly bad her repeat what she had been saying.

Claudine then told her, that three gentlemen were below, who, she was sure, were her friends, and who certainly came to tell her some good news about the dear little boy. Rosalie, catching eagerly at the hope these words offered, seemed to make an effort to recal her dissipated and confused senses to a point worthy her attention. Claudine saw that she had gained her notice, and repeated all she had said, enforcing, with her utmost power, the idea that the three gentlemen in question were certainly sent by Montalbert to treat of a reconciliation, and restore her child.

Rosalie by degrees acquired so much power over her scattered and enfeebled
spirits,

Spirits, as to attempt recollecting what friends were most likely to be charged with such a commission; but her intellects were not equal to the research; bewildered and confused, she put her hand to her head, and sighing deeply, she appeared to give up the inquiry in despair. There were no friends of hers who answered the minute description Claudine had given of the strangers; nor did she know of any friends of Montalbert's, who were either acquainted with his marriage, or likely to be in his confidence. Hope, however, enabled her to re-assume her powers of reflection, and she became conscious, that, whoever the persons might be who thus interested themselves in her affairs, she ought to see them, if they were Montalbert's friends, on his account; if they were her friends, on their own.

But when it was necessary to make the exertion, which her returning reason told her was necessary, her strength so failed her, that it was more than an hour before

fore she was seated, by the assistance of the landlady, in an arm chair, and half an hour longer before she had, by the aid of hartshorn and water, obtained resolution enough to let Claudine go down with a message, that any one of the gentlemen who were most disposed to take the trouble of visiting a sick room, was desired to walk up.

An interval of some moments passed before a foot was heard on the stairs; but Rosalie, so far from finding her courage strengthened by the delay, had become almost senseless and breathless, when the door was opened by Claudine, and the figure which appeared at it she just distinguished to be Charles Vyvian, before her sight and consciousness totally forsook her, and she fell back in the chair, towards which he eagerly flew to support her.

“ My sister! (cried he)—my dear, dear Rosalie!—But is it, indeed, my Rosalie!—Good God! how changed!—how altered!—Where is Montalbert?—what
has

has happened?—and why are you reduced to this situation?”

Rosalie heard him not; but Claudine, amidst her efforts to recover her mistress, related all she knew. It appeared from the surprize Vyvian expressed, that, so far from knowing any reason for the conduct of Montalbert, he was not certain of his being in England, and that all the intelligence he had gained, as to the residence of Rosalie, came from Mrs. Lessington.

Claudine, who saw her mistress incapable of listening to this discourse, renewed her lamentations; while Vyvian, eager and impatient, and not considering the consequences, bade her call up the gentlemen below: an injunction which Claudine, as inconsiderate as himself, immediately obeyed.

Rosalie, therefore, hardly opened her eyes after so unexpected an appearance as that of Charles Vyvian, before they were struck with the figure of William Lessington, who, though greatly altered since
she

she saw him last, she immediately knew: but the suddenness of his appearance, the distress visible in his countenance, and still more in that of the stranger who stood by him, with clasped hands, and an expression of mingled terror, pity, and affection, silently gazing on her, amazed her so much, that she was incapable of asking either who he was, or why he seemed so interested in her fate?—She was incapable, indeed, of speaking at all, but held out her hand to Mr. Lessington, in a manner which forcibly expressed—“ Oh! friend and guide of my youth! why have you so long deserted your unhappy Rosalie?”

Lessington now spoke to her.—“ My dearest friend! (said he), my sweet Rosalie, you are ill!—you are unhappy!”

“I am, indeed,” she would have answered, but she could not articulate the words. Her attempt, however, had something so affecting in it, that the stranger could no longer restrain the emotions which arose in his breast; he burst into an agony of tears, and, turning from her, exclaimed—

"She too is destroyed—destroyed as her mother was, by the accursed house of Montalbert!—Yes!—the nephew resembles the uncle—he has murdered my daughter!"

These strange exclamations served entirely to overcome the feeble spirits of Rosalie; she no longer comprehended, and but indistinctly heard, what passed.—Lefington hung over her with the tenderest concern, while Vyvian walked about the room in great agitation; yet attempted to appease that of the stranger, and now and then spoke a broken sentence to Rosalie. It was evident, that far from relieving the sweet sufferer, for whom they were all interested, by a continuation of this scene, they did but increase her anguish, yet none of them had sufficient presence of mind to remark this; and there was no woman about her, who had sense or observation enough, to advise them to withdraw till she could acquire more composure.

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The agitation of the stranger became more violent. It was Ormsby, the unfortunate father of Rosalie, who, having returned with an ample fortune from India, had been informed, on his first inquiries, that Mrs. Vyvian was dead. From Mrs. Lessington he had learned, that young Vyvian, her son, was, by a paper she wrote to him before her death, acquainted with the real relationship in which Rosalie stood to him, and with the circumstances that had rendered her marriage with his father a source of continual unhappiness.

Charles Vyvian, who had always loved his mother much better than his father, whose sole attachment to him originated in family pride, no sooner knew this history, than, with every attention that delicacy and duty required towards the character and memory of his mother, he sought, as soon as he returned to England, the family of Lessington. The eldest son, who was settled near Oxford, was more easily applied to than any other part of it. To him, therefore, Vyvian addressed him-

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self,

self, and thither also Mr. Ormsby was directed, when, on application to Mrs. Lessington, he found she was herself settled in the north. After an explanation between these gentlemen, they determined to seek Rosalie together; and set out for Eastbourne, without suspecting that she was suffering under any other unhappiness than that which arose from a temporary separation from her husband; they arrived at Eastbourne, and found her emaciated by illness, injured in intellects by grief, and incapable of feeling that portion of happiness and prosperity, which, they hoped, it would have been in their power to offer her.

Ormsby, from the moment he had learned that he had a daughter living, who was worthy, for her own sake, of the tenderness he was disposed to feel towards the representative of the woman he adored, he cherished the most flattering hopes of happiness with a lovely being, who would recal continually to his mind the hours of his early felicity, and gild the evening of his

his life. He now found all visionary bliss vanished at once, and the bitterness of his disappointment was aggravated, when he remembered that the blow, which had murdered his happiness a second time, came from the same family that had destroyed it before. The injuries, the deceptions, the tyranny, of Old Montalbert, which had driven him from the bosom of his first Rosalie to exile and to sorrow, now seemed to be revived in the nephew to rob him of all he had left; and, in the anguish of heart, which these thoughts gave him, he forgot, that, by his unguarded transports, he was deepening the wounds he deplored. Such, however, were the unhappy effects of his expressions on the bewildered mind of his daughter, who catching from them some vague ideas about her mother, (whose name he often repeated), though unable to follow the chain of circumstances to which these expressions alluded, that her spirits were entirely overcome; and, when he fondly called her his daughter, his only hope on earth,

his poor unfortunate child ! she was so far from understanding it was her father who spoke to her, that she wildly fancied it was the same person who had been sent by Montalbert to take her child from her. She shuddered, therefore, as he approached her ; withdrew her hand from him, as he attempted to take it, and looking with wild and eager eyes towards Lessington, who engaged her notice more than Vyvian, she appeared silently to entreat that he would deliver her from the presence of a person, of whom, was evident from her manner, she had conceived some unfavourable impression.

Shocked by this conviction, and assured that her intellects were entirely gone, the unhappy father hastily left the room, and threw himself into a chair in the parlour below, where he gave way to the anguish of his soul.

The sight of Rosalie, though she resembled her mother more by her air and voice than by any positive likeness of features, had brought to his mind a thousand

sand tender recollections; and, in believing
 her irreparably hurt both in her under-
 standing and constitution, he felt, as if the
 wounds that had been so long healing,
 after his separation from her mother, were
 now torn open afresh; and the happiness
 which he had fondly hoped might gild
 the evening of his life seemed now va-
 nished for ever.—Why Montalbert had
 left Rosalie, or why he had so cruelly
 taken her child from her, he could not
 imagine. Vyvian had learned these par-
 ticulars from Claudine, and had unguard-
 edly communicated them to the rest; but
 as Claudine was herself ignorant of his mo-
 tives, she could only relate the facts, and
 Mr. Ormsby, never disposed to think fa-
 vourably of the family of Montalbert,
 could see nothing in such actions but an
 hereditary depravity and malignity, which
 he execrated. It was not long before
 Vyvian joined him in the parlour. Ormsby
 said little to him of the resolution he was
 silently forming, while Vyvian, who was
 extremely hurt at the situation of Rosalie,
 bns1

whom he had ever tenderly loved, believing it impossible that Montalbert could act, as he was represented to have done, without some very strange misunderstanding, determined to set out immediately in quest of him, and, representing the situation of his wife, endeavour to develop the cause of his having thrown her into it by his rash and unkind conduct.

Mr. Lessington, in the mean time, was attempting to sooth and appease the troubled mind of his ever-beloved Rosalie, in hopes of learning and of alleviating her distress. He at length succeeded so far, as to procure from her the words "Yes!" or "No!" to some of the questions he put to her; but to others she remained silent, or answered only by a deep sigh. Finding he could gain, therefore, but little information, though he staid with her near half an hour longer than the other two gentlemen, he left her, saying he would return to her immediately, and rejoined his distressed friends below.

Some

Some conversation there passed between them, in which the calmness of Mr. Lessington was happily opposed to the agitation of a father oppressed with sorrow, and the natural vivacity of Vyvian, who now felt disposed to quarrel with his cousin, and now to account for conduct which seemed to him unpardonable, if some reason could not be given for it.

Lessington, whose attachment to Rosalie had grown up with him, listened to each of them with patience, but acquiesced in neither of their plans. That of Mr. Ormsby, though he did not openly avow it, was to seek Montalbert, demand an explanation of his conduct, and, if he could not give some very good reason for measures so harsh and violent as he had adopted, to demand of him the satisfaction due to the injured honour and peace of the unfortunate Rosalie. Lessington perfectly understood this by the half sentences and angry expressions of Ormsby, and he saw the necessity of preventing a measure which must involve the object of his so-

licitude in yet deeper calamity? It was not easy, in the present agitated state of his mind, to say any thing that would not rather irritate than sooth, and, therefore, Lessington affected to attend rather to the project of Vyvian, who proposed setting out immediately to find Montalbert, and endeavour to clear up whatever mistake had given rise to proceedings so unlike the usual tenor of his conduct.

Though Lessington was clearly of opinion that Vyvian was not the properest person to engage in this explanation, yet, as he hoped to obtain Ormsby's patience while he was about it, and that something might happen in the mean time to clear up the darkness in which they were involved, he seemed to agree to Vyvian's departure, still, however, with coldness and reluctance, and as if he meditated on some scheme which he thought more eligible. At this instant Lady Llancarrick and Miss Gillman appeared; the former having heard of the arrival of the strangers, introduced herself to them as the dear friend
of

of Mrs. Sheffield, and, as such, it seemed probable that she could give them information as to the cause of the appearances which had so greatly distressed them. The change of name, which, though Mrs. Lessington had mentioned it, had been hardly attended to before, now seemed to strike Mr. Ormsby as if it were entirely new to him—Why should his daughter have changed her name?—An appearance of concealment is always injurious. It might, however, be at the desire of her husband, since their marriage was clandestine. This reflection satisfied his mind for a moment as to that circumstance, but, as Mr. Lessington and Mr. Vyvian continued to converse one with Lady Llan-carrick and the other with Miss Gillman, Mr. Ormsby, who listened to them alternately, found so many obscure hints, or evasive answers in their conversation, and thought them women whose acquaintance seemed so little creditable to his daughter, that his uneasiness became insupportable.

He

He dreaded lest in the conduct of Rosalie he should find but too strong a justification of that of Montalbert. This idea was infinitely more painful to him than to believe her innocent and suffering only from misapprehension or injustice, and unable to bear the distress of mind, which every moment increased, he started up, and, leaving the room, walked up a lane near the house, which he traversed with hasty and uncertain steps while the conference lasted, which had already given him so much uneasiness.

Before that conference ended, the conviction that both Lessington and Vyvian had entertained of the perfect and unimpeachable discretion of Rosalie was cruelly shaken. They had learned from Lady Llancarrick, who either could not or would not conceal any thing she knew, that, under a feigned name herself, and under the protection of a young man of the name of Walsingham, she had appeared at the village, where she had lived since in a retired

tired way, but frequently receiving him at her house, and, as it was generally understood, supported by him.

To two young men, who knew nothing of the extraordinary chain of events which had separated Rosalie from Montalbert, (for Vyvian had passed eighteen months in the German Courts, from whence he had come to England only three months before this period), these circumstances could not fail of having a very unfavourable appearance. Vyvian, as soon as the ladies from whom they had gathered this intelligence were gone, talked of seeking this Mr. Walsingham, and demanding an explanation of him; a scheme which appeared to Lessington to be more pregnant with mischief than even that proposed by Ormsby. They now went in search of the latter, and found him overwhelmed with sorrow and anxiety. The state in which his daughter was, gave him the most acute pain, which was infinitely increased by the dread he now entertained as to her conduct.—What Lessington and Vyvian had to say, though
the

the former softened it all he could, was but ill calculated to appease these fears; and a conflict now arose in the breast of the unhappy father, between his wish to return to, and, if possible, comfort his afflicted child, and his reluctance even to see her, if it could be true that she had deserted her husband, and disgraced herself.

He determined, however, once more to see her, and to see her alone. He found, on entering her apartment, that all the symptoms that seemed to have a little subsided, while she had been flattered with hopes of hearing news of her child, had since returned with renewed violence; a deadly paleness overspread her countenance, and a fever seemed to devour her. If Claudine spoke to her, she answered only by a deep sigh, and when she became sensible that a stranger was in the room, and opening her eyes saw Ormsby, she cast a reproaching look towards Claudine, waved with her hand for him to leave her, and then, covering her face with her handkerchief, sunk into silence, from which

not

not even the voice of Lessington could rouse her:—he, at the desire of Mr. Ormsby, went to her, spoke to her, and entreated her to attend to her own health, to the anxiety of her friends; he even named her father to her, but he could obtain no other answer, than a faint entreaty that he would leave to her destiny a creature born only to be miserable. At length, she said, “My father!—alas! I have no father!—Do not mock me! I never saw a father!—I had a husband—indeed I had a child, but both are gone, and I am now a wretched outcast?”

“Have you not friends, Rosalie?—(Lessington then ventured to say)—Surely there are some in whom you place confidence and friendship, though you deny it to him whom you once loved to call by the tender name of brother?”

To this it seemed as if she was either unable or unwilling to answer directly; for again, with a deep-drawn sigh, and in a half-stifled voice, she said, “You—you are my brother still, William, if you do
not

not disdain the title—and then I shall not be—as, indeed, I think myself now—quite—quite friendless!

She was now again sensible, yet Lessington doubted whether it was a proper hour to speak to her of her father, since every time he had either spoken to her, or been named to her, her ideas seemed to have taken a confused flight, from whence it was not very easy to recal them; and though Mr. Ormsby earnestly wished she might be made to understand that he was her father, yet Lessington saw her mind so shaken by trying to impress on it what her mother had, he believed, never fully related to her, that he dreaded lest such an attempt now might be of the worst consequences.

All he judged prudent to do, therefore, was to sooth her mind as much as he could for that night, and persuade her father to leave her. This, though not without difficulty, he effected. Ormsby went again with him to the parlour, whither the landlady was now summoned to give information

tion where the best physician in the neighbourhood was to be obtained.

A messenger was dispatched for one, but hardly was he gone, and Lessington entering into conversation with his two friends on what he thought was properest to be done, when a servant on horseback brought a letter, directed for Mrs. Sheffield, which, he said, required an immediate answer.—On being questioned by Mr. Vyvian who it was from, the man answered insolently enough, “ That he had no orders to tell that, unless to the lady herself; but that, for his part, he was never ashamed of his master’s name—it came from Squire Walsingham.”

Ormsby, who saw in the name of Walsingham, and in such a correspondence, a confirmation of all the fears that had assailed him for the reputation and peace of his daughter, determined to open this letter. Lessington at first doubted how far this might be justifiable; but yielding at length to the authority of a father, the letter was opened, and, to the astonishment and

and indignation of the parties, was found to contain these words——

“MADAM,

“A gentleman of the name of Montalbert has taken the trouble to write to me, on a supposition of my being a much more fortunate man than I have ever suspected myself to be. He wishes me to meet him at my own time and place, to explain to him my pretensions to the very great favours which he assures me you have honoured me with, as well in a certain long voyage, which it seems we made together, as since our return to England, where he affirms you have remained under my protection.

“Having hinted to him that I am perfectly unconscious of all this, I have received a second letter, couched in terms which do not generally pass unnoticed between gentlemen. Now, Madam, if I must risk the penalty, it is but just that I should be made conscious of the happy trespass by which I have incurred it; when

I am

I am persuaded I shall meet with exultation whatever may happen; or if it hitherto exists only in the imagination of my correspondent, I am, nevertheless, ready to meet him as he desires, provided that before I become *his* adversary, you will permit me to assume the pleasing and honourable title of your champion.

“ But, as no time is to be lost, I await your answer with extreme impatience, flattering myself it will bring permission to throw himself at your feet, one who is,

Dear Madam,

Your most devoted servant,

S. WALSINGHAM.”

Vyvian had no sooner heard the contents of this extraordinary billet, than he flew out of the room to find the servant that had brought it, for it appeared as if the writer of it was waiting somewhere in the neighbourhood, and he was at all events resolved to find him.

Of Mr. Walsingham, neither Ormsby, Vyvian, nor Lessington knew any thing but the

the name; and this letter, of whatever nature might have been his acquaintance with Rosalie, having certainly the air of an insult, was not calculated to give them a favourable opinion of him. None of them could help seeing, that a meeting between him and Montalbert must be attended with fatal consequences, if not to the life of either, at least to the honour of the unfortunate young woman, who was the cause of their quarrel. Vyvian, breathing nothing but vengeance against a man capable of writing such a letter, would listen to nothing that Lessington could say; and Ormsby, lost in bewildering conjectures, but more uneasy than ever, determined at length to pursue his original plan of finding Montalbert; and, having learned the cause of his conduct, and of the present extraordinary letter, to take Rosalie and conceal her in some obscure retreat if she was guilty; or, if she was innocent, to vindicate that innocence in the face of the world. It was, however, necessary for him to await the arrival of the physician who
 was

was sent for, as it was certain the personal sufferings of his unhappy daughter became every hour more alarming. Lessington, with the most patient pity both for Ormsby and his child, remained with him; but his arguments had no longer any effect on the impetuosity of Vyvian, who having learned, from the servant he had questioned, that Mr. Walsingham was at Brightelmstone, set off thither in a post chaise, attended only by his servant, assuring his friends that he had no design of taking the resentment of Montalbert out of his hands; but that he was determined to clear up this extraordinary business in some way or other, and that they should hear of him in a very few hours.

With these assurances, since he would hear nothing Ormsby or Lessington could say to urge remaining with them, they were compelled to suffer him to depart.

CHAP. XXXVI.

IT was already late in the evening, and Ormsby and Lessington awaited in the most distressing suspense the arrival of the physician they expected; the messenger sent to him having returned, to say he would be with them as soon as possible. Rosalie, though still conscious of, and grateful for the attentions of Lessington, seemed too ill to enter into conversation or explanation of any kind. But at length in attempting to sooth and to reason with her, he prevailed upon her to say, that she should die contented, and even prefer death, if she could but see her child once more, and ask his father's protection for him. This was more than she had yet coherently said; and Lessington, who was now alone by her bed-side, made an effort

to carry the conversation farther. "And why, my dear Rosalie," said he, "why do you doubt his protecting his son? Since he has taken him from you, however unkind that step may have been, as far as it regards you, Mr. Montalbert had probably no other design than to take care of him, and give him a father's protection."—"Good God!" exclaimed Rosalie, "can you, my dear Sir, believe that he could have been guilty of so very cruel an action, as tearing him from me, had he not determined to destroy me, and to erase all recollection of a marriage, which he probably repents, and is ashamed of?—His mother, his cruel mother, and his treacherous friend Alozzi"—she here paused a moment, unable to go on—"have prevailed on him to abandon me. Perhaps too, some newer attachment for I can never think that *they* alone could influence him—some newer attachment." She could proceed no farther; the idea was too cruel to be supported; and her voice

voice became inarticulate through the violence of her emotions.

Lessington had never heard her speak so much, and so consistently before, and greatly as he saw she was affected, he yet hoped that tears might rather relieve than injure her; he therefore ventured, after waiting a moment that she might recover herself, to go on.

“Perhaps, my dear Rosalie, neither of these causes may have occasioned the estrangement you deplore.—Perhaps, . . . forgive me if I seem to impute to you what you may be, and I believe are incapable of—but possibly some *unintentional* indiscretion on your part may have been exaggerated and misrepresented.—Montalbert may have conceived himself injured by your conduct, and has rashly treated you as culpable, without hearing your justification.”

Rosalie pausing a moment, as if to recollect her agitated spirits, raised herself on one arm, and with her other hand taking the hand of Lessington, she said in
a low

a low, yet solemn voice, "My dear brother! as there is truth in Heaven, I was never guilty of the slightest deviation from my duty, even in idea:—Montalbert must know my heart too well to suppose it.—I long doubted of his existence; for you know how we were separated.—Yet never, Oh! no never did my heart wander from its faith and affection to him!"

"I do believe you, my poor Rosalie," said Lessington, "I sincerely believe you, though *how*, or even how long you were separated, I am totally ignorant."

"I have papers that will explain it to you, my William, but I feel that it must be when I am no more; then Claudine shall deliver you a small box, in which you will find a journal of my unhappy life, while I was able to keep a journal.—Yet a little, and I shall need no other justification to Montalbert.—When he finds that he has destroyed me, it is he, poor man, who will want consolation—who will be an object of pity."

Rosalie spoke slowly, and with difficulty, and in a weak, faint voice; yet her anxious father, who had glided into the room, heard her distinctly; and as she had never appeared to him so collected before, he was tremblingly solicitous for her to learn that he lived, and sought only to protect her:—Like one who sees his sole treasure half escaped from an abyss, yet knows it is not quite in safety, and dreads to see it again snatched from his uncertain grasp. So Ormsby seemed lost in the contrariety of emotions he felt: he softly approached Lessington, and in a whisper besought him to speak to Rosalie of her father. But, however carefully he uttered this, his daughter heard some words, which as every thing now hurried and alarmed her, made her hastily put aside the curtain.

The amazement, not unmingled with some degree of apprehension, which she expressed on seeing a stranger, was a proof how little she remembered of what had passed before: Ormsby, unable to command his emotion, sobbed aloud. As
 stooping

stooping over her, he took her pale and emaciated hands; "Rosalie!" cried he, "dear representative of the most beloved, and most injured of women—Speak to me—Speak to, and acknowledge your unhappy father!" The look with which she regarded him alarmed Lessington, who said, "My dear Rosalie, your mother has left with Vyvian papers, in which it is declared, that before your marriage she discovered to you the mystery of your birth, and why it was that you passed as the child of my parents, while your own were concealed.—Recollect, my sweet friend, all that your dear mother said to you; and then you will at once understand how it is that your father, who very lately arrived from the East Indies, now hastens to claim the only treasure his fate has left him." All the particulars indeed that her mother had related at that moment returned to her mind: her heart acknowledged the dear tie that was now offered to it; she raised her languid frame, and would have thrown herself into the arms of Ormsby,

but her strength failed her—she was only able to pronounce “ My father,” before she sunk down in the same state of weakness which had often appeared so alarming—but before Ormsby or Lessington could conjecture how they should repair the imprudence they had thus been guilty of, the physician they expected arrived.

It was hardly possible that he could come at a more unfavourable time to judge of his patient: he found her indeed in a state, which, as the reason of her violent and extraordinary emotion could not be entirely explained, gave him an opinion of her danger, even beyond the truth; and when he retired with her father and Mr. Lessington, he expressed such fears as to the event of her illness, that Ormsby, half frantic, could hardly be prevented from setting out for London immediately, and bringing down, at any expence, the most eminent physician, who could be prevailed upon to take the journey. Lessington saw that this would answer no purpose, since if Rosalie was in so hazardous a state, as
 she

she was believed to be, it would be too late to expect relief from assistance that was to come so far. He thought it better to engage the gentleman now with them to remain all night, and to await the event of the morning; and this with some difficulty he accomplished.

The fever which preyed upon Rosalie, and which had originated solely in anguish of mind, increased during this miserable night; but it seemed no longer to affect her intellects: amid variety of pain, her senses were so clear, that she repeated to Claudine what she had said relative to the box which was to be given to her friends. She told her too, that it was her father who was below, and that she had never seen him before, but forbore any other explanation. Ormsby and Lessington, who could neither of them sleep, and who did not indeed attempt going to bed, had visited her room several times during the night, and flattered themselves from these symptoms that she was amending: but when Dr. G. saw her at an early hour of

the morning, he thought her fever higher, and the whole house was in consternation and despair.

It was towards noon—the physician was gone, having promised to return in the evening. Ormsby and Lessington, as the suffering patient was apparently sleeping, had walked out to relieve their fatigued and anxious spirits by the air, and having remained out about half an hour, they were met, just as they entered the house, by Claudine: who, with expressions of great joy in her countenance, told them, in her broken English, “ That Mr. Walsingham was come; Le bon Walsingham, l'excellent Ami de sa chere Maitresse;” for all that, and more his generosity to her, had made him appear to Claudine. Claudine therefore was very much surprised and mortified to find, that the intelligence she was eager to communicate was so far from giving pleasure to either of the gentlemen, that they advanced towards the parlour, where she had told them Mr. Walsingham was,

was, with evident marks of anger in their countenance and manner.

The letter they had seen addressed to Rosalie, impressed them with the most unfavourable idea of the person they were going to meet: Ormsby, shocked at his arrival, which seemed a confirmation of fears in regard to the conduct of his daughter, which had been a while suspended by fears for her health, was tempted to affront him even on the first moment of meeting him; and it was with difficulty he was diverted from this petulance by Lessington, who said, as they were entering the house, "I own I cannot see, my good Sir, what we shall gain by preventing an explanation from this young man, which he will certainly not give us, if we directly insult him: whereas, if there is any mistake in all this (as I cannot but believe there is), a little coolness may serve, if not to make us easy, at least to produce such an explanation as will direct our resentment. Above all things, it seems to me necessary

to avoid every thing like violence in this small house, if you would not endanger yet more the life of your daughter."

Ormsby felt the reasonableness of this remonstrance, and checked his own feelings as much as possible, though his countenance and air expressed them but too forcibly. If these gentlemen were astonished at his appearance, after such a letter as he had written, they were still more so, to find him a young man of a very different appearance to what they had figured to themselves the writer of so impertinent a letter must be.

Walsingham, unconscious of any offence, and rather supposing he should be received as the friend and protector of Rosalie, (for Claudine had explained who these gentlemen were) was immediately repulsed by the angry countenance of the elder gentleman, and the cold and distant bow of the other. He advanced, however, and in that graceful manner which his habitual dejection rather made more interesting, he expressed the extreme concern

cern he felt at hearing of the indisposition of Mrs. Montalbert. Yet how much satisfaction it gave him, (and he bowed to Ormsby as he spoke), to learn that she was happy in the tender attentions of a father. "If you *know* me, Sir," said Ormsby, "you ought to know and to feel, that your presence here is an insult which must deserve the deepest resentment of injured honour. Are you come, Sir, to overwhelm with shame my unfortunate daughter in her last hours? Are you come to triumph over a miserable family, whom you have ruined in their fame, and in their happiness?" All the passions of an injured father, combined in the bosom of Ormsby, who trembling, and for a moment deprived of breath, gave Walsingham (as he stood petrified by such an address), time to say—

"*Am* I come, Sir, with *this* design? am I come with *any* design injurious to the peace and honour of Mrs. Montalbert? Certainly not. You must greatly have mistaken me, if you suppose it." Ormsby,

by a motion of his head and hand, expressed what he could not at that moment find words to utter: while Lessington, taking advantage of this involuntary silence, said, "After such a letter, Sir, as that with which you have affronted Mrs. Montalbert, and, through her, all her family, all her friends, you must suppose."

"A letter, Sir," interrupted Walsingham, "a letter from me? and insulting Mrs. Montalbert? That is a charge which I own I am not prepared to answer. I have most certainly never written to Mrs. Montalbert since I had the honour of seeing her last."

Ormsby, naturally violent, yet subdued by time and trouble, was so overcome, that he had thrown himself half suffocated into a chair. Lessington, more master of himself, continued to speak for him.

"The letter, Sir, however, that we received, can admit of no excuse: you have seen or heard of Mr. Montalbert?"

"Pardon

"Pardon me, Sir, I have done neither—I did not even know he was in England."

The countenance of Walsingham underwent a visible change as he said this; Lessington failed not to remark it, but imputed it to emotions very different from those that Walsingham felt while he continued to speak.

"No, Sir, I did not even know Mr. Montalbert was come to England; but as it appears that he is, may I request the favour of a direction to him? You will also oblige me by shewing me the letter, which I am supposed to have written to his wife, if she is, as I fear, too ill to admit of my applying to her for it personally."

The emotion of Walsingham increased; he turned very pale, and his lips trembled.

"I have not got the letter," said Ormsby, "nor has my daughter ever seen it; Mr. Vyvian has taken it with him to Brighthelmstone, where your servant told us you were to be found, in order to demand an explanation."

“ *My servant!* ” exclaimed Walsingham, more and more surprised; “ there is certainly some strange mistake in all this. Pray, Sir, with what name was it signed ? ” Lessington then answering that it was “ S. Walsingham. ” Walsingham began immediately to suspect the truth ; but when Lessington explained to him the contents of this letter, and that they evidently alluded to a demand of satisfaction, which the writer of it had received from Montalbert ; and when he also said that Vyvian had left them the preceding evening in the full determination to have a meeting with Mr. Walsingham, all the mischief which might happen between Montalbert, Vyvian, and his gay, fashionable cousin (from whom he now easily understood the letter came), occurred in an instant to his mind. He saw that the death of one of them, perhaps of more, was likely to follow from the mere mistake of a name. He saw the extreme concern which Rosalie might feel, if any evil should happen even to a stranger, whose offence towards her was at least palliated

liated by ignorance; but should Montalbert or Vyvian be wounded, or fall, the consequences to her must be still more dreadful.

All this no sooner struck Walsingham, than he explained as clearly as he could the nature of his apprehensions to Lessington, who saw at once that they were too well grounded, for Walsingham described his relation as rash, haughty, and violent; one who could be much more likely to retort any affront with interest, than to enquire the ground on which it was given. Ormsby and Lessington were also well assured that Vyvian was irritable, proud, and impatient; and though neither of them were personally acquainted with Montalbert, they had no reason to believe, from all they had heard of him, that he was by any means of a calmer disposition. A collusion then between these three, or even any two of these fiery spirits, could hardly fail of producing some fatal event.

The generous mind and excellent heart of Walsingham were never more conspicuous

cuous than at this moment. Without seeming to advert to the challenge, which it was certain Montalbert had sent to his cousin, while intending it for him—without any menace, or even hint of his resentment, he expressed nothing but a wish to go immediately in pursuit of the parties, and endeavour to prevent a meeting, from which so much was to be dreaded. It was not till after a severe struggle, however, that he could determine to quit the house, not only without seeing Rosalie, but without enquiring after her health, or the circumstances which had deprived her of it so suddenly. Claudine had told him enough to convince him that Montalbert had been actuated by jealousy, and he supposed the object of that jealousy was himself.—A thousand painful thoughts crowded upon his heart—the husband of Rosalie was returned:—No doubt, therefore, remained of his existence; and it became more than ever prudent for the ill-starred Walsingham to stifle the growing affection which must now be utterly hopeless.—

less.—But so much did that affection partake of his noble spirit, that the happiness and the peace of Rosalie were infinitely dearer to him than his own, and he flew to save the husband, whose life was between him and those hopes which, in despite of reason, he had at times indulged.

If his task was in this respect painful, it was hardly less so in what related to Mr. Ormsby; though the matter of the letter was cleared up, he saw, that the father of Rosalie regarded him as one who had been the cause of Montalbert's estrangement from her; that long and disagreeable explanations must take place, and that he could hardly hope to be received even as the friend of her to whom he felt such painful partiality.—Ormsby, while he anxiously hastened his departure, treated him with coolness, almost with incivility; but Lessington, with milder manners, was more ready to believe that no blame could attach to the conduct of Rosalie in regard to him. Walsingham saw enough to give him great fears on her account; and with

a heart penetrated by sorrow, he set out post to overtake Vyvian, and, if possible, meet Montalbert, who, from the substance of his relation's letter which Lessington repeated to Walsingham, was, he concluded, either at Brighthelmstone, or in its neighbourhood, waiting the rendezvous which he had demanded.

The wild indiscretion of Claudine had communicated to her mistress the arrival of Walsingham; and though her regard for him was as pure and innocent as that which she felt for either of those whom she had learned to consider as her brothers, yet she suffered extremely when she found he was gone, and had not seen her: not only because she was sure it would give him pain, but because it convinced her that the generous protection he had offered her had been the cause of his becoming suspected by those who ought to have felt the greatest obligation towards him; and because she dreaded lest he should be involved in farther difficulties on her account.—She did not indeed know how
near

near he already was to the dangers she apprehended for him.

Ill as Rosalie was, however, she was not so enervated in mind as in body; and after hearing from Claudine an account of Walsingham's departure, and all she had collected or fancied of the conversation while he staid, she summoned resolution enough to determine upon putting into Lessington's hands the account she had kept of every event, from her arrival at Naples to the moment when she so unexpectedly met with a friend and protector in Walsingham, and was delivered almost by a miracle from her hopeless confinement. During her voyages she had also made memorandums of every occurrence, and since her residence at Eastbourne she had returned to her journal, and related the events of her life, monotonous as they were, in the flattering hope that Montalbert might one day go over them, and that they might bear testimony to her unceasing attachment to him, and to her duty.

In

In the effusions of an ingenuous and unadulterated mind there is always a simplicity of character, which at once evinces the truth of whatever it relates. Though Rosalie thought not of that, she yet felt, that if once Montalbert could be prevailed upon to read her narrative, all that had befallen her would be explained.—Shocked as she was at his cruel conduct towards her, and despairing ever to see him more, she had directed that these papers might not be delivered till after her death, which she believed to be nearly approaching; but as from what Mr. Lessington had said to her, from the sudden appearance of Walsingham, his departure without seeing her, and from all that Claudine had told her, of the manner and countenance of Mr. Ormsby, Rosalie had but too much reason to think the generous friendship of Walsingham towards her might endanger his life, she rallied her feeble and fainting spirits to consider how it was possible to avert the dreaded evil. She saw this could only be done by her putting into the hands
of

of Lessington these proofs of Walsingham's disinterested friendship, and leaving him to act as he knew his own prudence and sense would dictate.

CHAP. XXXVII.

CLAUDINE went down by the direction of her mistress, who requested to see Mr. Lessington. On his entering the room, he found her raised in the bed by pillars; her countenance was very much changed for the worse since he was with her last, and her pale hands trembled while she sorted some packets of papers tied with ribands, which she took out of two boxes that were before her.

She looked at him, but did not speak. It, therefore, immediately occurred to Lessington, that Claudine had informed her of Walsingham's arrival and departure; and he felt confused and distressed, not knowing how he could avoid giving the sorrowful information she would seek.—Rosalie, on her part, not only feared to ask

ask any questions, but dreaded to hear what had passed—for she was now possessed of recollection enough to advert to all that Lessington had said, and knew that Walsingham was an object of suspicion to him and Mr. Ormsby: nor could she doubt but that the conduct of her husband had been occasioned by the same mistrust.—The appearance, therefore, of Walsingham, must undoubtedly have deepened all these ill impressions, and Rosalie could not think upon them without the most acute pain, since it was but too probable that the generous and disinterested friendship of Walsingham had brought upon him treatment he little deserved, and which she thought him very unlikely to bear patiently. If these fears and conjectures were almost insupportable, what would she have suffered, had she known how much of the evil she apprehended was already realized; while Walsingham, unwearied in generosity, was more than ever entitled to her gratitude and regard.

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Her sickened soul, where indeed rested the cause of all her complaints, so far affected her enfeebled frame, that, when she would have explained to Lessington the nature of the papers she put into his hands, by relating her situation at the various times on which they had been written, she could hardly finish even a sentence—but, putting the packets into his hands, she faintly bade him read them in the order in which they were tied.—

“ You, and my poor father, (said she, in a faint voice), will find that your unhappy Rosalie has done nothing which ought to make you ashamed of the affection you have felt for her.... Vindicate my honour, William!—rescue my memory from reproach!—and, for the sake of my dear, dear boy, convince his father that I die innocent of all reproach, and that even in death I bless and love him.” -----

She would have said more, but put her hand to her forehead, and signified that she could not.

Lessington,

Lessington, affected even to tears and sobs, could not command himself sufficiently to speak. The sight of his emotion added fresh pangs to what she endured, when, waving her hand, she seemed to entreat him to leave her, and he silently obeyed.

It was some time before he could recover himself enough to read aloud the melancholy narrative thus entrusted to him, to which Mr. Ormsby listened with anxious yet gloomy attention. When they had arrived at that part of the journal, written on board the ship which brought her to England, they saw far enough into her story to be convinced that the meeting of Rosalie with Walsingham was entirely accidental; that she could not have acted otherwise than she did, and that the conduct of Walsingham had been that of the most generous and disinterested of friends: little, therefore, remained necessary for the entire vindication of both parties, but to remove the false impressions given by Lady Llancarrick and her friend, that they had
resided

resided together at Eastbourne, which, though those amiable ladies had not asserted, they had spoken of in such a manner as to leave little doubt of the fact.

Jealous for the honour of his daughter, which her own artless narrative had nearly cleared, (so powerful is simple truth), Ormsby now pressed eagerly to have all his remaining doubts satisfied. Though Claudine could not keep up a regular dialogue, she could make herself understood when plain questions only were put to her. Ormsby, with that trembling apprehension which is felt by those who dread the result of an inquiry which they are yet determined to make, called her into the room, and, with the assistance of Lessington, had already convinced himself, that Mr. Walsingham had acted with the utmost delicacy and propriety in regard to Rosalie, when a post chaise and four, the horses extremely fatigued, drove up to the door, and a gentleman, unknown to both Ormsby and Lessington, entered the room.

Pale,

Pale, his hair in disorder, his eyes wild, and his whole person expressive of haste and distress, he uttered something, in a manner so incoherent, that neither of them understood him. He saw they did not; and, throwing himself into a chair, he said, "I suppose I speak to Mr. Ormsby and Mr. Lessington. . . . I imagine, Sir, (addressing himself to the former)—I imagine your daughter is here?"

Ormsby, alarmed and amazed, hesitated a moment, hardly knowing what to say. The stranger, without waiting for his answer, continued to speak——

"I know not whether you see before you the most injured, or the most guilty, of men——I only know that I am the most wretched!"

"It is Mr. Montalbert, I believe, to whom I speak! (said Lessington).—It is long, very long, since I saw you last, Sir—and I fear——"

"You fear, and with but too much reason, (said Montalbert, interrupting him), that our meeting now can only be pro-

ductive of pain. Vyvian has told me-----”

“ You have seen Vyvian then ? ” inquired Lessington.

“ I saw him, but not till it was too late. He is gone in search of another man of the same name as him whom *I* most unfortunately met—and-----”

“ Good God ! (exclaimed Ormsby)—you have met then with that Walsingham, to whom Rosalie owes her safety, perhaps her life, and you have had the cruelty, the rashness-----”

“ To kill him ! ” cried Montalbert with fierceness, and in a tone that re-echoed through the house.

Claudine, on the first appearance of Montalbert, whom she had never seen before, had listened at the door of the room, which was left half open ; she heard this terrible speech, and, shrieking aloud, ran up stairs, but before she reached the door of her lady’s room, she fell down in a sort of fit, sobbing and screaming aloud. This was not wanting to terrify the unhappy

happy

happy Rosalie; for tremblingly alive to every alarm since her child had been torn from her, there was seldom any thing passed in the house to which she did not listen. She heard the stopping of a carriage, the entrance of a person into the parlour, and soon after the voice of Montalbert, uttering the dreadful sentence—"I have killed him!"—struck her ears; then the shrieks of Claudine, who seemed to be immediately at her door—desperation lent her strength.

She had on a loose dressing gown, when throwing herself out of the bed, and holding by the furniture, for she was unable to move without such help, she reached the door of her apartment. Claudine weak, and at that moment incapable of exercising the very little judgement she ever possessed, continued to intercept the way, having thrown herself down on the stairs. Rosalie, leaning against the door-case, attempted, but in vain, to obtain an answer; and her increasing terrors threatened every instant to deprive her of the

little strength she had thus collected, when Lessington, aware of the sad effect that such a noise in the house must have, suddenly quitted Montalbert, without staying to hear all he had to relate, and hastened up stairs, in hopes of appeasing the foolish maid, and accounting to Rosalie for the alarm in some way which might not destroy her at once; to his utter astonishment he found her out of her bed, looking more dead than alive, and just sinking to the ground as he sprang forward, and caught her in his arms, then carrying her into her room, he placed her in a chair, and rang for assistance, for he believed her dying, and forgot, in that moment, every thing else.

The consequence of his violence, however, was, that the father and husband of Rosalie rushed also into the room, where Lessington, supporting her head, and chafing her hands, continued to implore that assistance which none had the presence of mind to give. Some person, however, had by this time fetched the apothecary, and

and the usual remedies being administered, Rosalie seemed to be recovering. It was then, at the earnest entreaties of Lessington, that Montalbert and Ormsby were prevailed upon to go out of the room, and Lessington soon after followed them, declaring that his sister (for so he always called her) was much better, and, if left to the women for a little while, would soon be entirely recovered. It was, however, easy to see he did not think so; for, incapable of following advice he was so solicitous to give, he could not forbear listening at the door, going half-way up the stairs, and shewing many symptoms of extreme inquietude. He dreaded, indeed, even the restoration of Rosalie's senses, when he was assured she would immediately ask questions; to which the folly of Claudine, or the matter of fact of the woman of the house, would give answers that might occasion the most dangerous relapse. These uneasy apprehensions were not appeased by the appearance of the apothecary, who expressed himself under the

greatest alarm for the event, entreated that the lady might be kept quiet, and that the next visit of the physician might be hastened.—Montalbert heard all this in a state of mind it is impossible to describe. He knew, indeed, that Rosalie was ill from the report of Vyvian; but he knew not how ill, having seen him only for a moment.

Now all her danger appeared to him with redoubled terrors. From the little explanation, which his passion would admit of during his short and unfortunate interview with Walsingham, he began to doubt whether he had not been guilty at once of ingratitude and cruelty, and whether he should not now be punished with eternal remorse, as well as by losing Rosalie for ever. Still ardent and impetuous, he inquired why he could not go or send for the physician instantly—then not listening to any reasons that were given him, why it would be ineffectual, he started up, demanded of Mr. Greenwood, the apothecary, his positive opinion as to the state of
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of the lady above stairs, and insisted upon being allowed himself to see her. Against this, however, Lessington remonstrated warmly, and Ormsby even angrily; while Mr. Greenwood protested to him, that, if she was subjected to any farther alarms, he would not answer for her life till morning. He said that he had already been compelled to quiet her harrassed spirits by a medicine for that purpose; and if its effects were counteracted, such was the weakness of her frame, and such the nature of the fever which continually seized her, that the most fatal effects would very probably follow: he then took his leave.

Montalbert threw himself into a chair, and gave himself up to the most dreadful apprehensions. Ormsby walked about the room in a state but little better, while Lessington, ever useful and composed, ascended softly to the chamber of the poor patient, whom he found sometimes uttering a few incoherent words in a low voice, then, with a deep sigh, sinking into silence. At length she seemed to become quite

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tranquil;

tranquil; and Lessington having insisted on Claudine's leaving the room, and engaged the woman of the house, with one of her maids, to remain there, returned himself to Ormsby and Montalbert, whom he was not very willing to leave long together.

The instant his immediate fears for Rosalie subsided, the idea that Montalbert had destroyed the unfortunate Walsingham recurred to the mind of Lessington. He shuddered, and, at once pitying and condemning him, recollected that his person was not safe; and if the event of his meeting with Walsingham had been as fatal as he represented it, he ought to hasten from a country where he was liable to be seized as a murderer.

Montalbert sat immoveable; he seemed regardless of any danger that might threaten himself, but listened to every noise in the house; and if he fancied any one stirred in Rosalie's chamber, he started, and eagerly asked Lessington if he thought she was awake and sensible?

Ormsby,

Ormsby, overcome with fatigue and anxiety, had now been persuaded to retire, and Lessington remained alone with Montalbert.

It appeared to the former to be absolutely necessary that Montalbert should be reminded of his danger, or at least that its extent might be known; taking occasion then when he made some sudden inquiry about his wife, Lessington said, "Allow me to remark to you, Mr. Montalbert, that your real tenderness for our poor unfortunate Rosalie, of whose innocence I am sure you will one day be perfectly convinced, cannot be so well shewn as by your recovering your presence of mind in the present sad conjuncture; and if the fatal event has happened, which you spoke of when you first arrived, you surely ought to think of your own safety, on which, I am sure, the life of Rosalie must depend."

"Walsingham was not dead when I left him, (answered he mournfully); but I fear his wounds are mortal!"

" Good God ! (exclaimed Lessington), and you remain here regardless of the event ? "

" Quite so, (replied he), as far as relates to myself.—What have I left, that should make me wish to preserve my life ? "

" Pray, (interrupted Lessington, who feared from his manner that he might relapse into violence)—pray relate to me what has passed since you were separated from my sister ? "

Montalbert put his hand to his head, as if almost unable to undertake the painful task ; but Lessington, who had many reasons for wishing to engage him in it, urging him again, he said——

" I conclude you know the circumstances that so strangely divided me from Rosalie.—I was returning to rejoin her in Sicily ; having left my mother so extremely displeased at my positive refusal to marry the lady she had chosen for me, that I intended merely to consult my wife before I declared our marriage, determining
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to return to England, and to live in the humble and obscure way our fortune demanded, till I became possessed of the property, however small, that must be mine after my mother's decease.

“ There were reasons that rendered our residence in Sicily unpleasant to me, even when we were together; the frequent absences, which our fear of my mother's displeasure had obliged me to submit to, became daily more insupportable, and I was forming schemes of retired happiness when I had thrown off this cruel restraint, and dared to be poor and independent. Judge then how horrible were my feelings, when, awaking from this dream of felicity, I found Messina in ruins, and the country for many miles around it convulsed by an earthquake, which had, two days before we made the coast, buried half its inhabitants.

“ I cannot tell you what were my sensations after I had with much difficulty landed, for I have never since been able to define them; nor do I know from whence

sprang the resolution with which I explored the place where the villa of Alozzi had stood, of which no other vestige remained than some pieces of black and half-burnt ruins: yet I looked with tearless eyes into the dark chasms in which it was sunk, though I thought they but too surely contained all I had loved—my Rosalie and her child!

“ The first evening that I arrived at this melancholy spot, where I had so lately left the lovely treasures of my heart in apparent safety, there was none near it—I was undisturbed in my gloomy contemplation, and remained lingering about the place, till my servant, who had followed me at a distance according to my direction, came to me at night fall, and led me to a cottage not far off, inhabited by a woman and her daughter, who had lost the rest of their family. Of these my servant made some inquiries, as they were tenants of Count Alozzi. He heard that the Count was seen after the first great shock, and had hired a vessel to take himself and some
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of his dependants to Naples ; but whether he escaped the second, or whether he was drowned with many others on the sudden reflux of the sea, these women had no means of knowing.—Here then was a glimpse, and but a glimpse of hope, that my wife and child might exist ; but, on farther inquiry the next evening, I thought even this faint hope vanished. I knew that when I left Sicily, Alozzi was gone to Agrigentum, and was to stay there some time longer than I proposed remaining at Naples. It was not now, however, a time to consider much the cause of his unexpected return. All my thoughts were bent on trying to recover from the ruins of his villa the sad remains of my lost family ; and with this dreary sort of satisfaction I occupied my mind, repairing the next day to the place, where I found three or four stout peasants already at work.

“ I inquired of them by whom they were employed?—they answered, in no very mild manner, by themselves, and for their own purposes and profit. I saw that
they

they feared I was disposed, if not authorised, to impede their designs; but by the most infallible of all arguments, (for I emptied my purse), and soon satisfied them that they should not be interrupted in the possession of whatever valuable effects they might recover, since my sole purpose was to search for the mangled relics of a wife and child. I offered them more money if they would procure farther assistance to expedite this search, and, explaining to them who I was, promised farther reward if they could procure me any certain intelligence of Count Alozzi. They agreed that he had been seen after the first violent concussion of the earth; but all believed, or affected to believe, he perished in the second.

“ It was now nine days since the fatal catastrophe, three of which I stood by the yawning cavern that had swallowed the villa of Alozzi. Little was discovered by the men who went down among the ruins; they were, indeed, more intent on their own purposes than on mine. On the

the evening of the third day I went down myself, and I thought that by the remains of wainscoting, or furniture, I should be led to the ruins of that part of the house Rosalie had inhabited. Desperate, I tore away, at some risk to myself, the door cases, broken or scorched pieces of building, and at length found the room where Rosalie usually sat. I could clearly distinguish that there were no remains of human bodies in it; two only had been found, and they were known to be servants; but though another day's search satisfied that no more persons were buried in these ruins, yet even this circumstance afforded no proof, that those my sickening soul inquired after were living.

“ With an anxious and hopeless heart I left the peasants busily employed in labour, which had already amply repaid them, and now sat out to wander over the country, asking questions of the unhappy persons who were yet scattered about it, though their answers only irritated my misery, or confirmed my despair.

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Most of them were too much occupied by the wants and woes of their own condition, to give much attention to me. After some days were thus vainly wasted, I crossed over to the other side of the island, and went among such relations and friends of Alozzi as had escaped any immediate share of the misfortune by being at a distance from that part where its violence had fallen. Among them I learned that Alozzi had quitted Agrigentum four or five days before the earthquake, and had gone, as they believed, to Messina, where they had no doubt of his having perished, as they had never heard of him since. There was hardly one of those families who had not some relation or friend to lament; and I only quitted one house of mourning to enter another.

To me, all appeared equally desolate and wretched; the image of my lost happiness continually haunted me, and I returned more unhappy than ever to the place where once stood the villa of Alozzi.

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“ By this time some peasants who had been dispersed, had come back to that neighbourhood also ; among them I met two or three Sbirri, who were, I thought, likely persons to have seen Alozzi, if he had indeed escaped, for they were daring and active, and were probably busy wherever pay or plunder were likely to be had from the rich that survived the earthquake. I entered into conversation with them, and heard that they had passed the night, after the first violent shock, at a house belonging to the Count, where they had seen him with a lady and her child, and a Neapolitan servant. That they knew the lady was an Heretic from the woman of the house, who, as well as those to whom she had given shelter during the horrors of that night, had expressed their fears of remaining under the same roof with a person of that description, and that some of the women had actually left it, lest she should draw Divine vengeance on the house.

This ascertained, beyond a doubt, that it was my wife who accompanied Alozzi,
I now

I now endeavoured to trace her farther, with an eagerness which those only can imagine, who, amidst the darkest despair, are suddenly dazzled with a ray of hope. I inquired of every body—I offered money for the slightest information, and sometimes paid it for accounts which I knew to be false. At length a man was brought to me, who assured me that he had conversed with Zulietta, the Neapolitan girl, whom he exactly described, and who had told him that her mistress and Count Alozzi were gone to Naples, and she was only by accident left behind. He named the time when, and place where, he had seen Zulietta: I bade him lead me thither, but learned that this young woman was gone to Catanca, with a person who had promised to find a passage for her to her home. To Catanca I followed her; she had left it a few days before with a family, who had taken her into their service, and was gone to Italy, but whether to Naples or not I could not learn. To Naples, however, I resolved to go, in order to pursue the

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the clue, which I hoped would lead me to the recovery of all I held most dear upon earth.

“ I had, however, lost above five weeks in Sicily, and on the voyage, which proved unusually tedious. At length I reached Naples, and, concealing myself with every possible precaution from all who were likely to know me, I hastened to the house of Alozzi.

“ The porter knew and admitted me. He told me that the Count had escaped from Sicily, and had even remained a month afterwards at Naples, which he had left but a few days since at a moment's notice, and without saying whither he was gone, or when he should return. As this was not unusual with him, there appeared nothing extraordinary in it to the servant, who, when I questioned him as to any lady who had with her a child, and who accompanied his master, he assured me he knew of none, with such an air of simplicity, that I could not but believe he at least knew nothing of the arrival of
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my wife with his master. A thousand fears, and of various sorts, now assailed me. I trembled at once for my Rosalie's safety, and even for her fidelity, if she lived. All the symptoms which I thought I had formerly remarked of Alozzi's admiration, if not attachment, recurred to me: he had not brought her to his own house publicly as the wife of his friend, whom he had assisted to escape from destruction. This indeed might be accounted for by my situation in regard to my mother; but why was she so carefully concealed from old and confidential servants? I closely questioned them all, and could not discover that one of them had the least knowledge of the Count's having rescued my wife and child. They all declared themselves equally ignorant whither he was gone; he had taken only his valet with him. On farther minute inquiry, however, I discovered that, for two or three days before his departure, he had appeared very uneasy and restless; was frequently shut up with his own man for a considerable

ble time after he had been running about on business, which, though it was a profound secret, seemed by his manner to be of great importance. I passed a whole day in these examinations, and, in attempting to trace the road Alozzi had taken, determined to follow and overtake him. I found that he was gone towards Florence, and thither I impatiently hastened.

“ I arrived at the house, whither I with difficulty had followed his track, the very moment he was stepping into his carriage, about which his baggage announced his being on a journey; when I advanced and spoke to him—he changed colour, hesitated, and trembled; I begged of him to go back with me for a moment, and, without farther preface, asked him what was become of my wife?

‘ What is become of her, Montalbert! (said he, still more agitated);—Do *you* know nothing of her?’

‘ I know

‘ I know (said I) that she left Sicily with you—that you have since concealed her somewhere.’

‘ I hope (added he, in a hasty and faltering voice) that you also know, then, for which of your English friends she chose to quit such protection as I was able to offer her, and in which she might undoubtedly have remained safe till your return.’ - - - - -

‘ My English friends! (cried I)—what English friends?—How could she meet them?—and - - - - -’

“ But I should never conclude what I have to relate to you, Mr. Lessington, were I to repeat the long discourse that passed. Alozzi told me a very plausible story of his sudden return to Messina; of his having sought and saved Rosalie and her child; and of his having afterwards placed her in a retired lodging, where, after a stay of near a month, during which he had done every thing in his power to tranquillize

tranquillize and sooth her with the hopes of my return, she became extremely discontented; insisted on his trying to interest for her some Englishman at Naples, with whom she might return to her own country; 'and, on my refusing to do so, (said Alozzi), she attempted, as I found afterwards, to bribe the servants I had placed about her, to deliver letters for her to any English gentlemen they could hear of. These people have protested to me, that they resisted every attempt she made to engage them in this research:—nor could I ever discover by what means Mrs. Montalbert contrived to find the person with whom she concerted her measures so well, as to escape during the night, and to leave no trace by which I have since been able to discover whither she is gone; though I have hardly slept since, my dear friend, so anxious have I been to recover, if possible, this lovely misguided wanderer, and to restore her to you, as a precious deposit of which I was not an unworthy guardian!'

“ I then

“ I then inquired of Alozzi, if he had come to Florence on any hope of finding her there. He told me he had, but that all his inquiries being baffled, he was departing for Rome, still on the same search. This was not enough for me; I insisted on his particularizing the reasons he had to believe my wife had gone to Florencè; this he appeared ready to do, and I thought them so plausible, that I resolved to go among my countrymen, who were then numerous at Florence, in hopes of learning something of my poor fugitive. This inquiry, which detained me a great while, and which it was extremely painful to make on so delicate a subject, ended only in convincing me that she was not at Florence; and though, from repeated conversations with Alozzi, I was far from being satisfied that Rosalie had not very different reasons for withdrawing herself from his protection, than those he had given, yet her impatience to be in England, or among persons of her own country, if not a partiality to some individual

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of it, made me only waver between doubt and despair, and happiness seemed certainly fled for ever."

Montalbert appeared so exhausted, that Lessington intreated him to take some refreshment; after which, all remaining quiet in the house, he thus continued his narrative.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

"**W**HITHER was I now to go in search of Rosalie? mistrusting as I did Alozzi, and doubting when he affected to be most busy in the pursuit, whether he had not himself concealed her. I determined, however, not to part with him—if his intentions were honest, he might assist me in my search; if not, I should at least have the chance of detecting him, by his endeavours to evade me, or by some of those oversights by which the most artful men often betray themselves.

"I therefore accompanied Alozzi to Rome, where we made acquaintance with every Englishman, and endeavoured to discover from them the names of their countrymen who had within a few weeks left Rome for England, or any part of Italy;

Italy; and in short made such enquiries as might lead to the object of our painful research. We gained, however, no satisfaction till at the end of a fortnight, when Alozzi came to tell me, he had met a *valet de place*, who had been accustomed to live much with the English at Rome; Alozzi said, the man was remarkably intelligent; that he had entered into discourse with him, and found that about three weeks before he had served (though for a few days only) an Englishman of the name of Walsingham, who came from Naples, attended by a young lady with whom this man believed he had eloped; for that his conduct while at Rome seemed calculated to baffle pursuit and enquiry, and that after a short time they departed very mysteriously, but he had good reasons to believe they went to Genoa, there to embark for England. Alozzi brought the man to me; I questioned him, and from his description I soon thought that Rosalie was the lady whom he had seen with Mr. Walsingham. I heard with anguish not

to be expressed that she was gay in spirits, and accompanied this Walsingham evidently by her own consent. She had no child with her; but if she had so far forgotten the father, as to follow another, she would have found no difficulty in abandoning her child.—The longer I talked with this man, the more clearly the fatal conviction flashed upon me.—The time answered exactly to that on which Rosalie left the house where Alozzi had placed her: the character of Walsingham was that of a man of boundless expence, and unrestrained libertinism; all served to persuade my senses that he had stolen from me the person and the affections of Rosalie.—Indignation and rage now animated a pursuit, which had before been prompted by tenderness and hope. With whatever resentment I thought of the infidelity of my wife, my heart turned with fondness towards my child, thus abandoned, as I imagined, to the mercy of strangers, yet I knew not where to seek him; and the desire of vengeance was even stronger than

than parental affection. After some consultation with Alozzi, it was agreed that he should return to Naples, where, by offering rewards, he had no doubt but he should discover my son, of whom he protested he would take a father's care, and send him to me by some trusty person, whithersoever I should direct. Alozzi departed, and I made the best of my way to Genoa; thither I traced persons resembling those I pursued, and on searching the registers kept at the *Dogana*, of people departing from that port, I found that about a fortnight before my arrival, Mr. Walsingham, an Englishman, with his lady and two servants, had embarked for England.

" I had now no doubts remaining—Rosalie passed for the wife of Walsingham, and as such was proceeding to her native country.

" Stung even to temporary madness, I adopted the sudden resolution of writing to my mother, reproaching her with the misery she had been the cause of, by compelling

pelling me to take measures which had
 torn from me the woman I adored, and
 with her all the happiness of my life; I
 told her that to make me any amends was
 impossible; that I should never see her
 more; but that if she were not totally lost
 to every feeling of humanity, I implored
 her to receive and protect my child, whom,
 by a letter written at the same time to
 Alozzi, I desired him to send to her. I
 hoped that even her bitter and inveterate
 prejudices might give way to pity and
 concern, when I could no longer offend
 her, and when she saw in a lovely and in-
 nocent infant the representative of a son
 whom she had driven to despair.

" Having done this, I gave myself up
 wholly to that thirst of vengeance which
 devoured me, and took my passage to
 England in the first ship I could meet with,
 but for which I had the mortification of
 waiting a considerable time.

" Every perverse accident, to which a
 traveller by sea is subject, conspired to
 retard my passage. The ship was old, and
 a bad

a bad sailer; the captain had not enough men to work it, and of the few he had, two were confined to their hammocks by an infectious fever. We were continually beaten back by contrary winds, and the mortality increased in our little crew so much, that when we came into the Strait, I insisted upon being put on shore at Gibraltar, where, having taken the fever, I became extremely ill, and, after a confinement of near a month, narrowly escaped with my life. This cruel delay over, I once more embarked in a sloop of war, and was at length landed at Plymouth. In London I could not fail to hear of Mr. Walsingham, for there a man of his fortune must be known. I obtained a direction to his house in Grosvenor Street, where I heard that he was just gone to Brighthelmston. I could no longer entertain a single doubt of my being right as to the person, for on enquiry of his servants I heard, that he was, a few weeks since, returned from a tour to Italy.

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“ I hastened, therefore, to Brighthelmstone, and to a house taken for the season by this Mr. Walsingham; I heard he was gone on a sailing party to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, but was expected back in a few days: his character answered to all I had heard of him abroad. Afraid of missing if I attempted to follow him, I resolved to await his return; but sleep forsook my pillow, and I wandered about from the dawn of the day, till the latest hour of night, without any other purpose than to wear away the tedious time that prevented my doing myself justice. It happened that I was sitting at a very early hour of the morning in one of the public libraries, where two of those *bon vivans* were also sitting, who regularly make tours during the summer months round the coast, to repair the excesses of their winter. I sat pensively silent, thinking on subjects, how different; when these two good citizens began a discourse on the various advantages or disadvantages of different bathing places: one related to the other, that

that he had lately left Eastbourne; where, said he, ‘ I got poultry pretty reasonable, and the wheat-ears were beginning to flock. There was not, indeed, much company; but then there were people that cared not what they gave for any thing; there was the famous Lady Llancarriek, and a Miss Something, one of your book-making ladies, with her. To be sure I thought it a little oddish to see her Ladyship quite hand and glove not only with that Miss What-d’ye-call’um, but with another young creature, who goes, you must know, by the name of Sheffield, but as the people there say, is the mistress of one Mr. Walsingham, a man of great fortune, who brought her from abroad.—My son Jack, who came down to me from Friday to Tuesday, and is a mighty chap for a pretty face, fell downright in love with this fine madam—though, to do her justice, she looks very modest for one of that sort; and egad, Sir, it was as much as I could do to keep him from making up to her—Why,

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Jack,

Jack, (says I), don't you see she is countenanced by Lady Llancarrick. He laughed, and said, the lady herself was no better than she should be, and he'd make love to them all three."

"Imagine, Mr. Lessington, what I felt at hearing this conversation.—I knew not what I said to the man, but he told me, with many bows, and some gasping grimaces, all he knew; among other particulars, that the lady had a child with her; and then they both walked away, probably much amazed at my inquisitiveness and violence; while listening to nothing but my rage and indignation, I ordered a post-chaise, and taking a lawyer with me, and a person to attend on the child, I sat out for Eastbourne: as you have heard Rosalie's account, you know that I saw her but for a moment: I could not indeed bear to look upon her—she was walking with the two women I had heard described:—I fled from her, and directing my son to be brought to me, I hastened back in a state of distraction, weeping
over

over the innocent unhappy boy, now accusing his mother of cruelty, and now protesting I would never think of her more.

“ I believe nothing saved me from attempting my own life, but my determined resolution to obtain satisfaction of Walsingham.—I waited a few days longer, and when he was returned, I sent to him a military friend, whom I met by accident, and who told me he was slightly acquainted with Walsingham. I stated my complaint, and this friend, Captain Wilmot, carried him a challenge from me, to meet at any hour he appointed the next day.

“ When Wilmot came back, he assured me, that Walsingham was extremely willing to meet me, if I insisted on it; but that he protested he knew not for what, having never seen Mrs. Montalbert in his life, and being totally unconscious of having ever done me the least injury. This falsehood only irritated my impatience.—But Wilmot advised me to recollect whether there might not be some mistake in

all this? 'I do not,' said he, 'know much of Sommers Walsingham, but I am sure his courage is not to be doubted; and as to an affair of gallantry, he is much more likely to boast of, than to deny it. I am persuaded, that had he eloped with Mrs. Montalbert, he would very readily have given you the satisfaction you demand.'—More enraged than ever at what I could not but think a base and cowardly evasion, and almost ready to quarrel with Wilmot himself, I was determined to seek Walsingham instantly, and compel him to give an explanation—but Wilmot, who saw that some mischief must happen if I did, prevailed upon me to let him return once more to Walsingham.—He came back in about an hour, and declared to me that Walsingham had given him such a detail of the circumstances of his life for the last six months, that he was perfectly convinced he had never had the slightest acquaintance with Mrs. Montalbert.—'Good God!' exclaimed I; 'this is *too* much—did I not trace him from Rome to Genoa; do

do I not know that the woman who accompanied him must have been my wife?

‘My dear friend,’ said Wilmot, ‘Walsingham acknowledges that he had a lady with him, but declares it was not Mrs. Montalbert.—He has told me who it was, and, if you insist upon it, the lady who is not far from hence will satisfy you as to her identity. Can you suppose, Montalbert (added Wilmot, very gravely), that I have so little regard for you, or hold your honour of so little moment, that I would trifle with, or deceive you? If you insist on fighting, I am ready to attend you.—But I repeat, that in the grounds of this quarrel I do believe you are wrong.’—I knew Wilmot to be a man of unblemished honour, and of undoubted courage; and though it yet seemed impossible that I could be deceived, I hesitated. At that moment Charles Vyvian came to me.

‘Not less rash, or less irritated than myself, for he had read Sommers Walsingham’s letter, Wilmot (who was even more acquainted with him than with me),
had

had the greatest difficulty imaginable to
 persuade him to hear what he had to say.
 At length it was settled, that as he knew
 the person of my wife, he should go with
 Wilmot to the lady; and if he was con-
 vinced that she had accompanied Walsing-
 ham from Italy, which he thought he
 should easily discover, it was agreed that
 I could have no quarrel with him. — This
 lady was at a small town, about twenty
 miles from Brighthelmstone, on the Lon-
 don road; and thither my friends repaired,
 with the consent of Sommers Walsingham.
 Towards evening I expected their return;
 I went out alone upon the hills, where I
 was accosted by a gentleman, whom my
 servant had, at his own request, accom-
 panied in search of me. He told me, with
 very little preface, that his name was
 Walsingham; that on hearing I was in
 search of him, and that some disagreeable
 circumstances were likely to happen by my
 having mistaken for him a relation of the
 same name, he had come from Eastbourne
 on purpose to give me the explanation I
 demanded.

demanded. I will not repeat to you the manner in which I treated Mr. Walsingham; my trembling servant, who dared not disobey me, brought the loaded pistols I sent him for; I absolutely refused to hear what Walsingham would have said.—The words, ‘I came from Eastbourne;’ and ‘*it was I—who accompanied Mrs. Montalbert from Italy,*’ were enough for me.—When he found me deaf to his intended vindication, he took a pistol, and bade me fire mine.—I did so—with too good an aim! the ball lodged in his side; he did not however fall: but firing his pistol in the air, he beckoned to my servant, whom I had driven with menaces to some distance; the poor fellow ran to him, and Walsingham, who had thrown away his pistol, leaning against him, said, ‘I am wounded—I believe mortally: lay me on the ground; go call some persons to be witnesses that your master has acted like a man of honour, and that I acquit him of my death.’—I had in the mean time approached him; and guilty as I still believed him,

him, I could not see the paleness of death on his face without anguish and remorse; he was lying on the ground, and seemed, amidst the pain which his countenance expressed, more solicitous for my safety than for his own life.—Touched by his generosity, I bade my man fly for surgeons: and when he was gone, I knelt by the suffering Walsingham with sensations of mingled rage and regret, which cannot be described, while he thus spoke to me:

‘ Mr. Montalbert, it is probable I have but a few hours to live :—hear me, I conjure you, when I declare upon the honour of a dying man, that your wife is as innocent as an angel; that I have ever treated her as a beloved sister; and that you will be guilty of the most cruel injustice in throwing her from you. I have not breath to tell you by what strange circumstance it happened that I was the instrument to release her from the power of your mother, who had confined her at Formiscusa. I feel very faint.—They tell me you have taken your child from her, and that she
is

is reduced to the brink of the grave by sorrow. . . . Restore her child—restore to her your affections, and try to make her happy—she deserves all your tenderness; and—if it should happen, as I am persuaded it will, that you are convinced you have been too rash—let not any remorse for what has happened disturb your tranquillity.—*I* am a being, who have long been weary of life—and for me Death has no horrors.—*You* may for many years constitute and share the happiness of an amiable woman; and it is some satisfaction to me, to think you will one day know that I was incapable of injuring you.’

“ He spoke slowly and with difficulty—I was incapable of answering!—but again he earnestly urged me to save myself by flight.—I incoherently told him, I hoped his wound was not mortal.—‘ I hope not, (said he)—but if it should, I intreat you, for the sake of Mrs. Montalbert, to take care of yourself.’—By this time my servant was come up with a surgeon; before he could decide whether the wound was
likely

likely to be fatal, or how he could attempt moving poor Walsingham, Sommers Walsingham, Wilmot, and Vyvian, arrived together with a chair, which they had the precaution to bring with them.

" I cannot relate what now passed.— Before the wounded man would consent to be moved, he insisted that the persons present should listen to the solemn declaration he made, that I had used him honourably, and was in no way to blame. I own this magnanimity, from a man whom I have perhaps injured, has deeply affected me. He bade my friends insist on my leaving the place, and Vyvian, I hardly knew how, forced me into a post chaise as soon as he had seen Walsingham's wound probed ; for, till he had brought me some intelligence of him, I would not stir.— The surgeon had not yet attempted to extract the ball ; nor could they pronounce with any certainty, but they entertained great fears for his life. Sommers Walsingham went off to London express, to bring down some very eminent man of the

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the profession; and at the repeated intreaties of Walsingham I came hither, without, however, meaning to withdraw myself from any inquiry that may be made—if he dies! ———

‘ You will, I fear, have too much reason to reproach yourself, (interrupted Lessington).—You never received then a letter, which, from her journal, I see our poor Rosalie sent to you from Marseilles, under cover to the English Ambassador at Naples?’

‘ Never! (replied Montalbert).—But has my wife then kept a journal—and may I not see it?’

‘ If you will be calm, (said Lessington), I will put it into your hands.’—Montalbert, subdued as he was, and beginning to be conscious of his own rashness, promised all that was asked of him; and in this perusal passed the rest of the night; Lessington continually going to the door of Rosalie’s chamber, where he found her much more quiet than he had ventured to expect.

At

At a very early hour of the morning, two post chaises stopped near the house. From one of them came Vyvian, with the little Montalbert and his maid; from the other, the physician who had attended Rosalie. Poor Montalbert saw them enter without having the power to speak. He questioned by looks the countenance of Vyvian, but found nothing that encouraged him to ask after Walsingham.—Vyvian, however, understood him, and said, “Walsingham is alive, and his case not desperate, though certainly dangerous.”

“Thank God! (exclaimed Montalbert), I may yet then taste of satisfaction!”——

“Be not too sanguine, (answered Vyvian); but I am all impatience to know the state of our poor Rosalie!”——Overcome by sensations so acute and various, Montalbert sat in breathless anxiety; his tears fell on the face of his child as he pressed him to his heart, and he cast an earnest look towards the door, as he heard the steps of the physician descending from Rosalie’s room.

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He gave, however, a better account of her than they had dared to promise themselves ; and, as he had heard from Vyvian a sketch of her story in consequence of his attendance on Walsingham, he ventured to advise that Rosalie might, as soon as possible, have her child restored to her, and be told that her husband was returned.

“ Mrs. Montalbert’s illness, (said he), is so evidently occasioned by uneasiness and fear, that my art can do nothing while those causes exist ; remove them, and she will soon, I believe, be restored to health.”

Montalbert then ventured to say — “ But, Sir, if this unfortunate Mr. Walsingham should die ? ”

“ I hope, though I cannot say he will not ! ” answered Dr. F——.

“ But at all events, (interrupted Ormsby, who having heard what had passed, now joined them) — at all events let my daughter see her little boy ; and you, Sir, (continued he, turning to Montalbert) — you, I hope, will now do her justice — you will.”

“ It

"It is not yet time, dear Mr. Ormsby, (said Lessington), to discuss many points, which, I hope, we shall amicably talk over hereafter. . . . Mr. Montalbert allows that the conduct of my sister has been unexceptionable, and that of Mr. Walsingham most generous."

"It is I only, (said Montalbert, in a mournful and somewhat stern voice)—it is I alone who have been to blame."

Lessington, fearful of what might follow, cried hastily—"We can none of us think that.—Alas! which of us, situated as you were, might not have acted as you did!"

Dr. F—— now departed, promising to send a messenger from Brighthelmstone, with the opinion of the surgeons, as soon as the gentleman (Sommers Walsingham) expected was arrived; and Lessington went up to prepare Rosalie for the sight of her child.

She had no sooner in her arms this darling of her affections, than she seemed to have obtained a new existence. Lessington

ton thought he might then venture to tell her, at least a part, of what had passed, concealing, however, the sad effects of Montalbert's passionate suspicions.

When he told her, her husband was in the house, she declared herself able to see him—for the slight view she had of him before seemed like a dream. She no sooner beheld him, than she attempted, but vainly attempted, to speak, while he, far from yielding to those transports of joy which he would have felt had not Walsingham been in danger, was wretched, though apparently restored to the bosom of happiness; and shuddered, as he thought, that Rosalie was perhaps embracing the murderer of her generous preserver, and one who might soon be an exile from her and from his country!

This painful suspense continued some days, for the situation of Walsingham was long doubtful after the arrival of his surgeon from London. Rosalie, though she did not yet leave her room, for she continued extremely weak, could not fail to
remark

remark the gloom that hung over her friends, and particularly Montalbert, who often fell into deep and melancholy reveries; then, suddenly starting, listened to any noise in the house, watched every one entering at the door, and seemed frequently so uneasy, that Rosalie, however, willing to impute his inquietude to the situation he was in with regard to his mother, which he had told her of, could not but discover that something of more immediate import pressed on his mind; she had never ventured since their reconciliation to name Walsingham.—Too well aware from the slight and half-stifled narrative she had received from her brother and her father, that Montalbert's jealousy had been the cause of the step he had taken as to her child, she feared to awaken it anew by naming him, while Montalbert, observing her caution, felt hurt that she did not speak of him openly and candidly—and these concealed sensations on both sides occasioned a sort of restraint that rendered them far from happy.

As

As Rosalie every day became better, and thought herself well enough to leave a place which reminded her of many days of suspense and uneasiness, she felt some surprise that neither her father nor Montalbert proposed her removal, for they had concealed from her their debates on this subject, which had not passed without some asperity on Montalbert's part. Conscious of high birth, and of his right to an ample property, he did not reflect, without bitterness of heart, on his reverse of fortune.—Instead of raising his wife to high affluence, he found himself and his son now almost entirely dependent on Mr. Ormsby, who, though related to him by blood, the notions he had acquired among foreign nobility taught him to consider as a merchant and an adventurer for gain. Ormsby, on the other hand, had been so long used to the most perfect obedience to his will from every body about him, that he was hurt at the little submission which Montalbert shewed to his wishes, when he expressed an intention of making a considerable

derable purchase, and placing Rosalie as mistress of his house and fortune. Montalbert fancied that Ormsby would not be sorry if the fatal termination of Walsingham's accident compelled him to go abroad; but secretly determined, if it did, that no considerations of interest should induce him to leave his wife and child in England.—Ormsby was not only conscious that he should have been happier to have found his daughter single, but fancied the sentiment justified by the pride and violence which he thought natural to Montalbert's character.

These heart-burnings between two persons, on whom the happiness of Rosalie so entirely depended, gave extreme concern to Lessington, and kept him from returning home, notwithstanding the repeated letters he received from his wife. Vyvian saw with equal concern that there was no cordiality between them; but the situation of Walsingham, whom he had twice visited, and whose character had im-
pressed

pressed him with the highest esteem, was a source of still deeper regret.

How strange is the disposition of human events! Rosalie, who but a very few days back suffered every possible calamity, now saw her husband returned, her child restored, her father in safety, and master of an ample fortune (circumstances which even in her most sanguine moments she never ventured to flatter herself with); yet, with all these blessings united, Rosalie was not happy; and had she known the situation of Walsingham, would have been extremely miserable.

Convinced, however, that something very serious occasioned the restlessness and anxiety which seemed to increase on every face that approached her, from some unguarded expressions, as well as from the extreme solicitude with which they had been explained away, Rosalie caught some vague suspicions of the truth, she contrived to question Claudine so narrowly, that the poor girl, who had long been

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sadly

badly overweighed with the secret, burst into tears, and disclosed all she knew.

Disqualified as Rosalie was to bear such a shock, the necessity of supporting it with calmness immediately occurred to her. Claudine, already terrified at what she had done, besought her to say nothing to Mr. Ormsby, whom she heard upon the stairs—but her countenance betrayed too evidently what passed: hardly, however, had she time to attempt evading her father's questions, when Montalbert appeared, and the necessity of her artificial tranquillity became more pressing. Vyvian and Lessington were walking; something like conversation was attempted between Ormsby and Montalbert, but it would have flagged, if Claudine, who dreaded their observations, had not opportunely brought the child, in whom they all took an equal interest. A packet, however, was brought into the room by the mistake of a servant, on which Montalbert had no sooner cast his eyes, than he changed countenance, and betrayed such violent emotion, that

Rosalie,

Rosalie, concluding Walsingham was dead, had only resolution enough left to avoid betraying, otherwise than by her features, the extreme pain this idea gave her. Montalbert, trembling with impatient dread, tore the letter half open : then recollecting himself, hastened out of the room, and Ormsby, who guessed that it brought some fatal intelligence, followed him.

The letter, however, instead of bringing to Montalbert the cruel intelligence he expected, was to this effect :

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have insisted on being allowed to write this letter, to satisfy those fears which the people about me have, I know, given you. My friend Bernard permits me to tell you myself, that he believes I shall in a few days be well enough to remove by slow journies to London, whither his business calls him so preffingly, that he can no longer attend me here; and as we have been friends from our childhood, I find myself so much happier in his than in other

hands,

hands, whatever may be their skill, that I am resolved to accompany him. You will conclude from this, that all the dangerous symptoms which have hung about me are removed; and I trust that the pain this affair has given you will no longer interrupt your present happiness.—For you must be happy, Montalbert, with so amiable a woman!

“ As soon as I am quite well I shall return to the Continent.—Consider whether I can do you any service with Signora Belcastro. Is it not possible, that, from misrepresentations, her general prejudice may have been raised into particular dislike?—I own to you, that from Mrs. Montalbert’s account, as well as from other circumstances, I fear Alozzi has been less sincerely your friend than you have believed. Perhaps I may be the fortunate means of undeceiving your mother; and you will really oblige me, by giving me an opportunity of being useful to you, either in this or in any other way.

“ If

" If Vyvian would come over to see me, before I go, it would give me pleasure.—I hope our friendship, however unpleasantly begun, will be permanent.—Permit me to offer to Mrs. Montalbert my most respectful good wishes; my dear little ward and fellow-traveller, is not old enough to remember me, but I shall always recollect him with pleasure. Adieu, dear Sir, I have exceeded Bernard's permission, and must hastily assure you, that I am your most faithful servant,

" F. WALSINGHAM."

This letter, though evidently written in pain and languor, took from the heart of Montalbert such a weight, that he seemed suddenly restored to happiness and reason. He determined to go over himself with Vyvian to visit this generous man, who had suffered so much for his inestimable services, and unparalleled goodness, and, forgetting all his former precautions, he was hastening to shew the letter to Rosalie, as soon as her father had read it,

when the entrance of Lessington and Vyvian prevented him.

Montalbert and Vyvian agreed to set out immediately, and Lessington undertook to relate to Rosalie the truths which had been so long concealed from her.—He found her already informed of all but the late relief from their apprehensions. She could not hear of the sufferings of her benefactor, and of his unexampled generosity, without great emotion: Lessington bade her indulge it, but still fearing lest Montalbert should again feel suspicions, which had already cost him so much, she tried to check her tears when Montalbert appeared—but it was impossible. And he, by a thousand tender apologies, intreated her to forgive his rashness and injustice, and encouraged her to indulge those tears, which a little relieved her oppressed heart.

Montalbert, Lessington, and Vyvian, now set out on their visit; the two latter took leave of Rosalie: Lessington returning into

into Oxfordshire, and Vyvian having determined to accompany Walsingham to London.

During the short absence of her husband, Ormsby talked over with his daughter their future plans of life. It was probable that Montalbert, however his pride might be hurt, would not now oppose the wishes of Ormsby, who seemed to place all his satisfaction in bestowing on his daughter a degree of affluence, which should set her even above the daughters of Vyvian, who had despised and contemned her: but Rosalie represented to her father, that, beyond a certain point, fortune contributed nothing to real happiness; that whatever attracted towards her the eyes of the world, would quicken the envy and malignity with which her story would be related, and could not fail to reflect on the beloved memory of her mother. To this argument Ormsby was compelled to yield, and he found himself under the necessity, however painful, of continuing to conceal from the world the relationship in which
he

he stood to Rosalie, wishing it to remain as much a secret as a circumstance could do already known to so many persons, and which, during Rosalie's illness, no pains had been taken to conceal.

Montalbert returned more deeply impressed than ever with the generosity of Walsingham. He had, however, paid all the pecuniary obligations Rosalie owed him, and they parted with mutual professions of friendship.

In a few days afterwards Mr. and Mrs. Montalbert, and their little boy, went round the coast into Kent, and took a house near Margate for the rest of the summer, while Ormsby made a tour through the western counties in search of a purchase for his daughter, where, at a small distance, he might find a residence for himself.

Montalbert, whose natural infirmities of temper had been chastised and corrected by the events which had so nearly deprived him of the felicity he enjoyed, seemed now to think that he could never make sufficient
amends

amends to his charming wife for the injury he had done her, by giving way to suspicions she so little deserved. About three months after his removal to London, Walsingham went to Italy, where, by means of some Italian friends of high rank, he procured an introduction to Signora Belcastro, and gradually contrived to inform her of the share he had had in delivering her daughter-in-law from her usurped power, while he undeceived her in regard to many representations made by Alozzi, who, finding himself baffled in designs, which the absence and probable death of Montalberthad occasioned him to form, had really been, in his turn, the dupe of Signora Belcastro, and had followed the scent she had artfully given, that Rosalie had eloped with an Englishman.——Walsingham acquired so much influence over the mind of this strange woman, that though he could not prevail upon her to forgive her son for having married as he did, she at length relented in favour of his children, and
settled

fettled upon them what she had intended for their father, to whom, however, her pride and Walsingham's persuasions prevailed upon her to allow a handsome annual income.

Montalbert enjoyed, at a small but beautiful place on the coast of Dorsetshire, with which Ormsby had presented his wife, more happiness than usually falls to the lot of humanity. Rosalie passed her life in studying how to contribute to his felicity, and that of her father, and, by her sweetness and attention, she won them both from those little asperities and difference of temper which had once threatened to destroy their domestic comfort.

But notwithstanding the cheerful and even gay letters which Walsingham wrote to his friends, letters which greatly contributed to the happiness of Rosalie, who retained for him the most grateful regard, he was still an unhappy wanderer; and when he had done all he could to restore Montalbert to his mother's favour, and
was

was no longer animated by the hope of serving Rosalie, he sunk again into that cold despondence, which a sensible heart feels when the world around is as a desert. The agonies with which he had wept over the grave of his Leonora had been suspended by the almost imperceptible attachment which had crept into his bosom for Rosalie, and which he had indulged but too much, after there appeared some probability that Montalbert was no more.

The last letters he wrote to England informed his friends that he was setting out on a tour through Spain and Portugal; and that finding himself more than ever disposed to wander, he thought it not improbable but that he might go from thence to the Cape, and so to the East Indies.—In the pursuit of science and knowledge he found consolation, when no benevolent action offered itself to satisfy his philanthropy; but so generally is misery diffused, that there were few places which did not offer objects for this indulgence—though none could interest him
like

like the amiable Being whom he had released from the dreary confinement of Formiscusa, and restored to the possession of the happiness she now enjoyed—a happiness which alone could soften the sadness of his own destiny!!!



THE END.

